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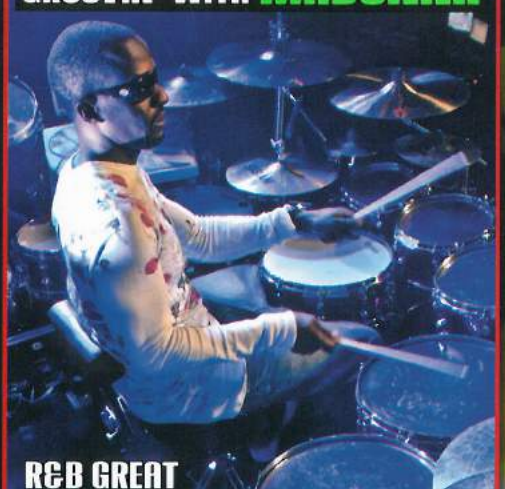

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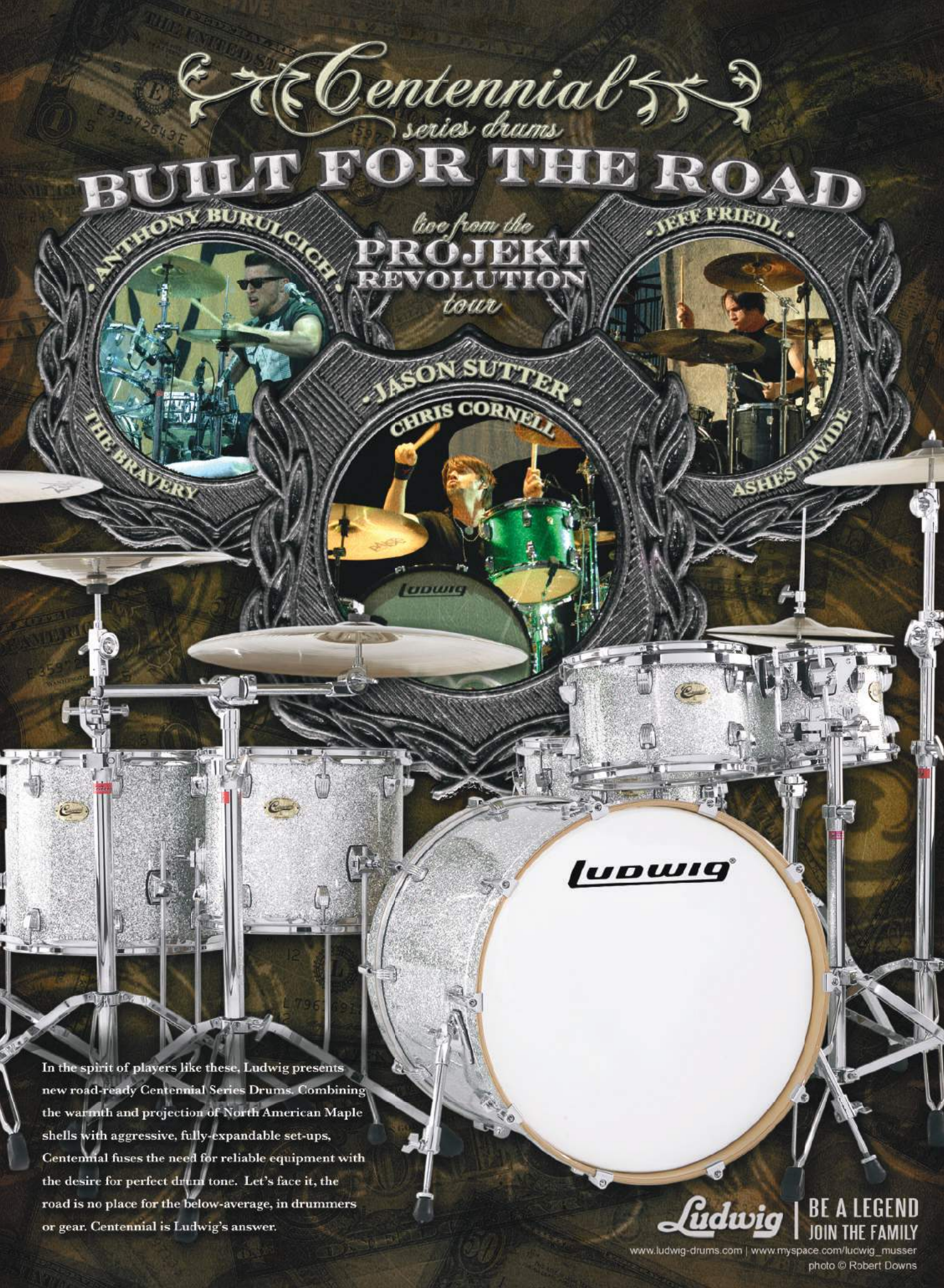
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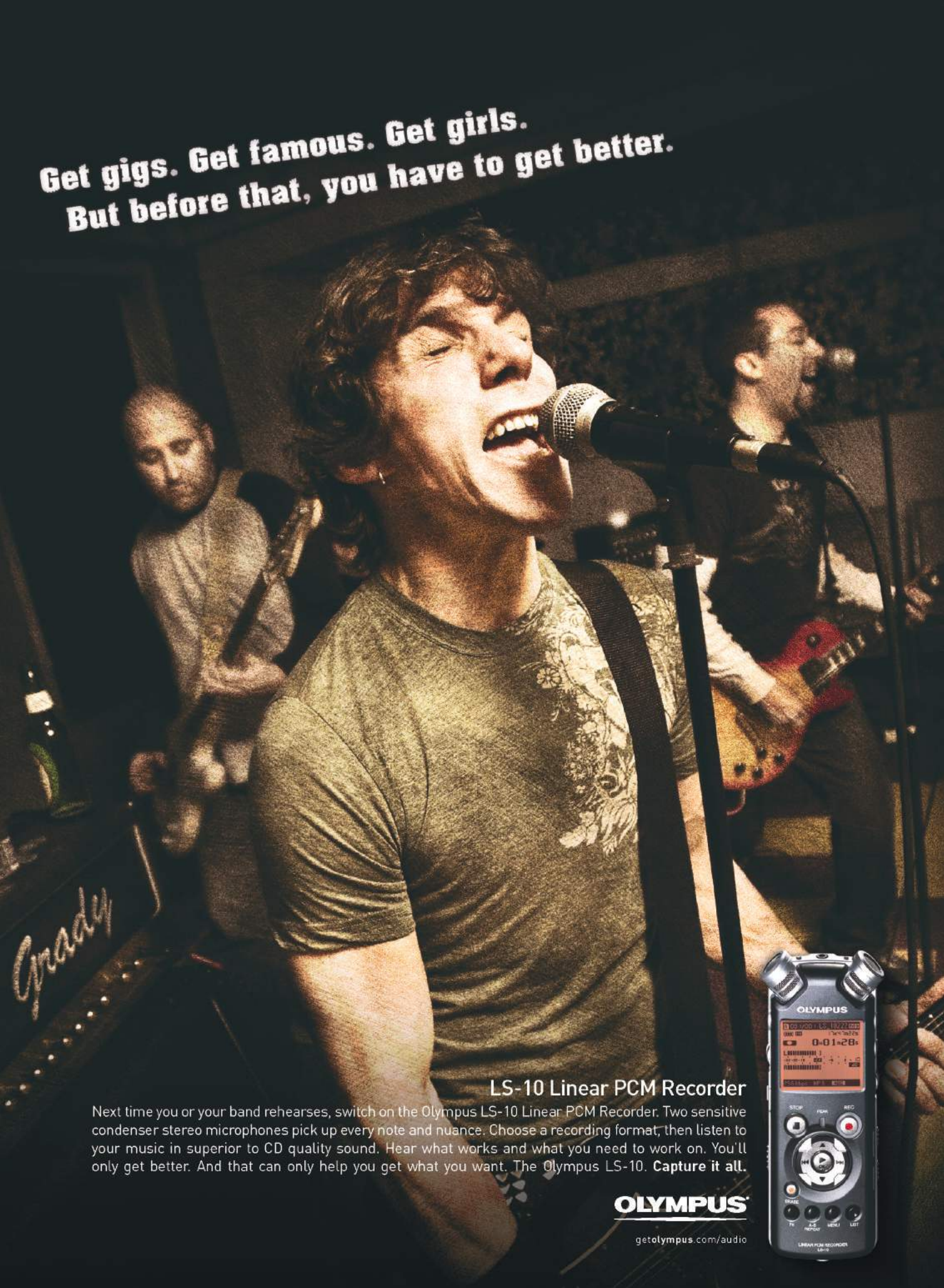

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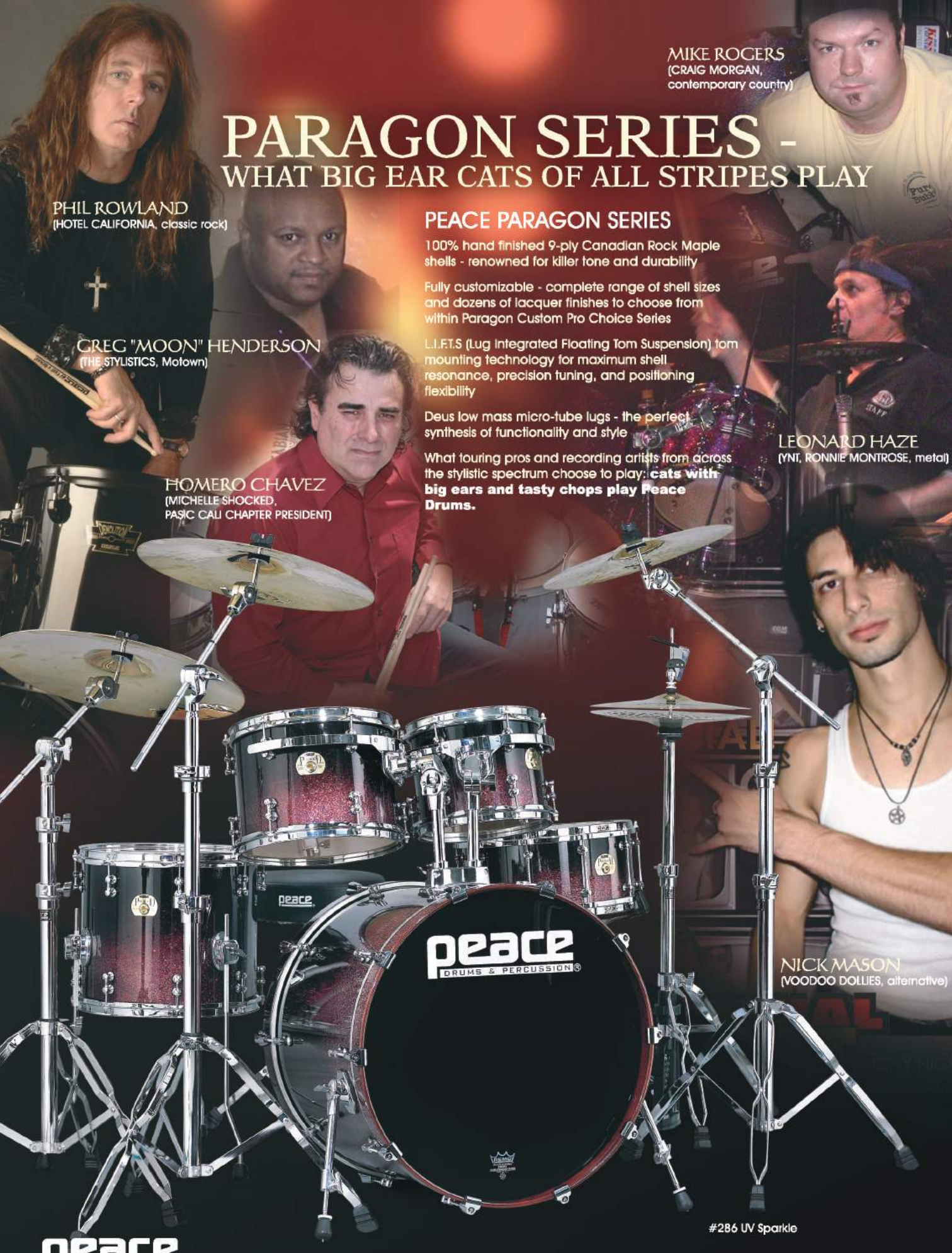

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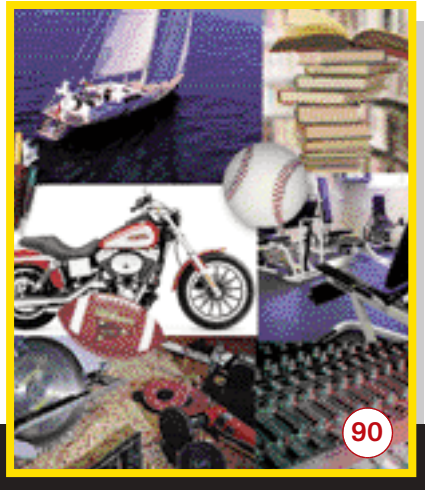

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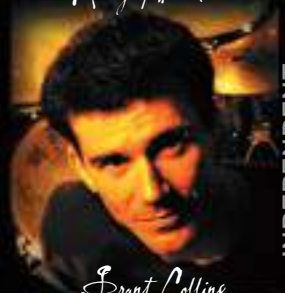

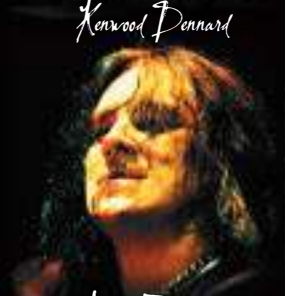

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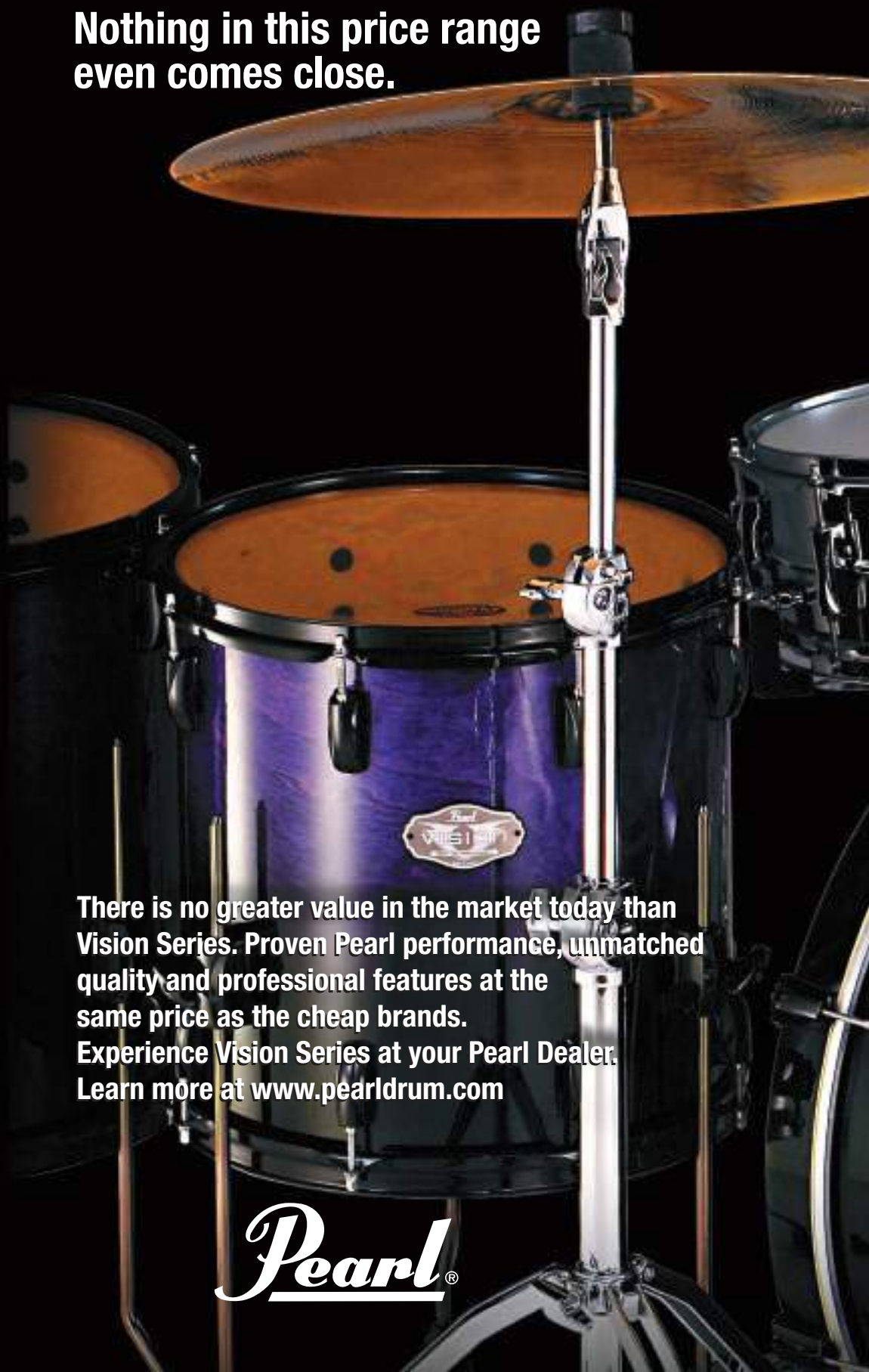

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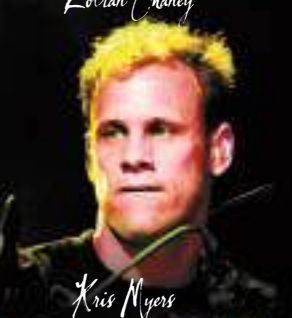

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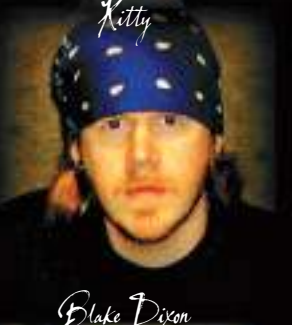

SAVING ABEL

Blake Dixon

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Pat Thetic

AVRIL LAVIGNE

Avril Lavigne

AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

The Punk Meets The Godfather

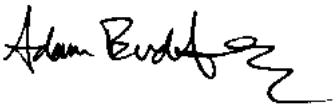
A couple of months ago, within a period of three days, I played my first club gig in quite a while—suffering all of the same indignities I'd experienced upon entering the New York scene years ago—and then acted as a judge in an American Idol–style teenage battle of the bands.

The Manhattan bar scene gets more challenging every year. Parking in most neighborhoods is a game of patience and ingenuity matched only by that weird Olympics competition where they have to swim a mile, shoot eighty rounds from a rifle, and knit a passable quilt in under an hour. This particular gig, the sound man is AWOL—literally; when the acoustic guitar goes out mid-song, he has to be called back in from his cigarette break to attend. To make matters worse, we pull the amateur move of using loops on some songs having done very little preparation. When the lousy monitor mix results in conflicting ideas about where "1" is, I pull the sampler's fader down and pray that the crowd assumes it's an intentionally artsy decision. And so on.

Two days later, I'm still cranky from the New York debacle and ready to scold a bunch of fourteen-year-olds for obviously slacking on their scales and paradiddles. And sure enough, my mood only darkens when the first couple of bands display little evidence that they've been taught the concept of "pocket," and struggle through songs that were written forty years ago. (A nine-year-old singing "Sunshine Of Your Love"? Creepy.)

But then, as has happened so many times in my life, rock 'n' roll—this time in the form of three slightly awkward teenage girls and a boy drummer playing cute and cool indie pop—saved me from my own jaded self. The group was obviously stoked to be onstage expressing themselves, and was playing music that seemed so appropriate for them and with such the right attitude, even my pre-school kids knew they were the best band of the day by far. Not the most accomplished players, not the most adventurous composers, the best BAND. They simply got it, and when after their set I said to them, "You guys really want to be rock stars, huh?" they practically leapt in the air: "Yeah we do!" I was thrilled and revived by their enthusiasm—and a little embarrassed by my own post-gig doldrums. "I can't wait to get back onstage," I thought, "and do it right this time."

Twenty years from now, if those kids are still playing gigs and slouching through the inevitable bummers of the rock life, I can only hope that they'll recall why they got into it in the first place, and trudge through. Because the music life is a tough one; you better believe if you want to succeed.



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Rock Band Rocks

I' m happy to read that teachers have embraced Rock Band as a valuable tool [August ' 08 Teachers' Forum]. In the past months I' ve gained a number of new students for the sole reason that they got Rock Band. (They even bring the included sticks to their lessons!) I' ve never had such motivated students. Imagine their glee when I tell them to play as much Rock Band as possible for homework—after they practice their rudiments, of course!

Mike Bruno

Rockabilly Roundtable

Thanks for the article on the rockabilly drummers in the August issue. Although I read all of the articles (as I believe I can learn from them regardless of whether I like the musical style or not), they are much more interesting when they cover a genre I immensely enjoy, such as rockabilly. More blues, rockabilly, and country-rock, please.

Clay Shannon

More From Readers Poll Winners

I want to extend my gratitude to the readers of MD who voted for me in the metal category of the Readers Poll [July ' 08 MD]. I' ve been an MD reader for more than twenty years. I could never have dreamed of being the subject of a cover feature or a Readers Poll winner! It' s very flattering and also humbling to be noticed and acknowledged by the drumming community in this way. Thank you!

Tomas Haake

Micke Sandstroem

Thank you for the Readers Poll Hall Of Fame award. It looks great on my wall! I am honored.

Ginger Baker

Thank you for including me in such an incredible honor, along with all the other great players in the MD Readers Poll. I' m humbled at being included again and look forward to another great year of playing drums with my buddies. I am so blessed to be able to spend this life doing what I love.

Paul Leim

Specialized Impact Pad Options

I want to expand a bit on the response you gave in the It' s Questionable section of the August ' 08 issue regarding impact-pad manufacturers. My company, Slug Percussion Products, has been making new, uniquely shaped impact pads since 1995, using polycarbonate film and patented vented designs that

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Eric Behrenfeld, Slug Percussion Products

Quotable Quotes

Out of roughly 240 or so issues of MD that I have read cover to cover, the August 2008 issue had arguably the greatest number of memorable quotes to date. It ran the gamut from Niko Bolas' take on Jeff Porcaro (" Jeff could track drums into your answering machine and it would sound hip") to W.S. Holland' s " We got us a recording contract that day, and that was the second time that I had ever sat on a drum stool." But my favorite was Deen Castronovo' s T-shirt worthy " At the time, doctors were prescribing Ritalin for kids with ADHA. My mother wouldn' t allow that, so, instead, she got me a drumset." That one is a strange mix of a disturbing reflection on society' s over-medication of children and fall-out-of-your-chair funny.

Dave Carlson

Rob Shanahan

Everybody Loves Deen

The Deen Castronovo story was way beyond what I expected. I had the honor a few years ago to meet Todd Sucherman of Styx, and in our conversation Todd spoke very highly of Deen. Although I felt Deen Castronovo should have been on the cover, the article was fantastic. I think Neil Schon summed it up perfectly: " Dean Castronovo is absolutely mind-boggling to watch night after night."

Dave Betti

Thank you for your excellent article on Deen Castronovo. I' ve seen Deen many times with Bad English and Journey, and he' s always great. I was a little disappointed, however, that in the Journey part of the article you forgot to mention Aynsley Dunbar, who put Journey on the map. Journey' s first four gold records came via Aynsley' s sticks.

Alan Arnold

DROPPED BEATS

In Deen Castronovo's feature in the August issue, Deen speaks of Dan "Beeler" from Exciter as one of his early influences. The correct spelling of Dan's last name is Beehler.

The photo of Ian Froman on the contents page of the October issue was taken by Andrew Lepley.

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ASK A PRO

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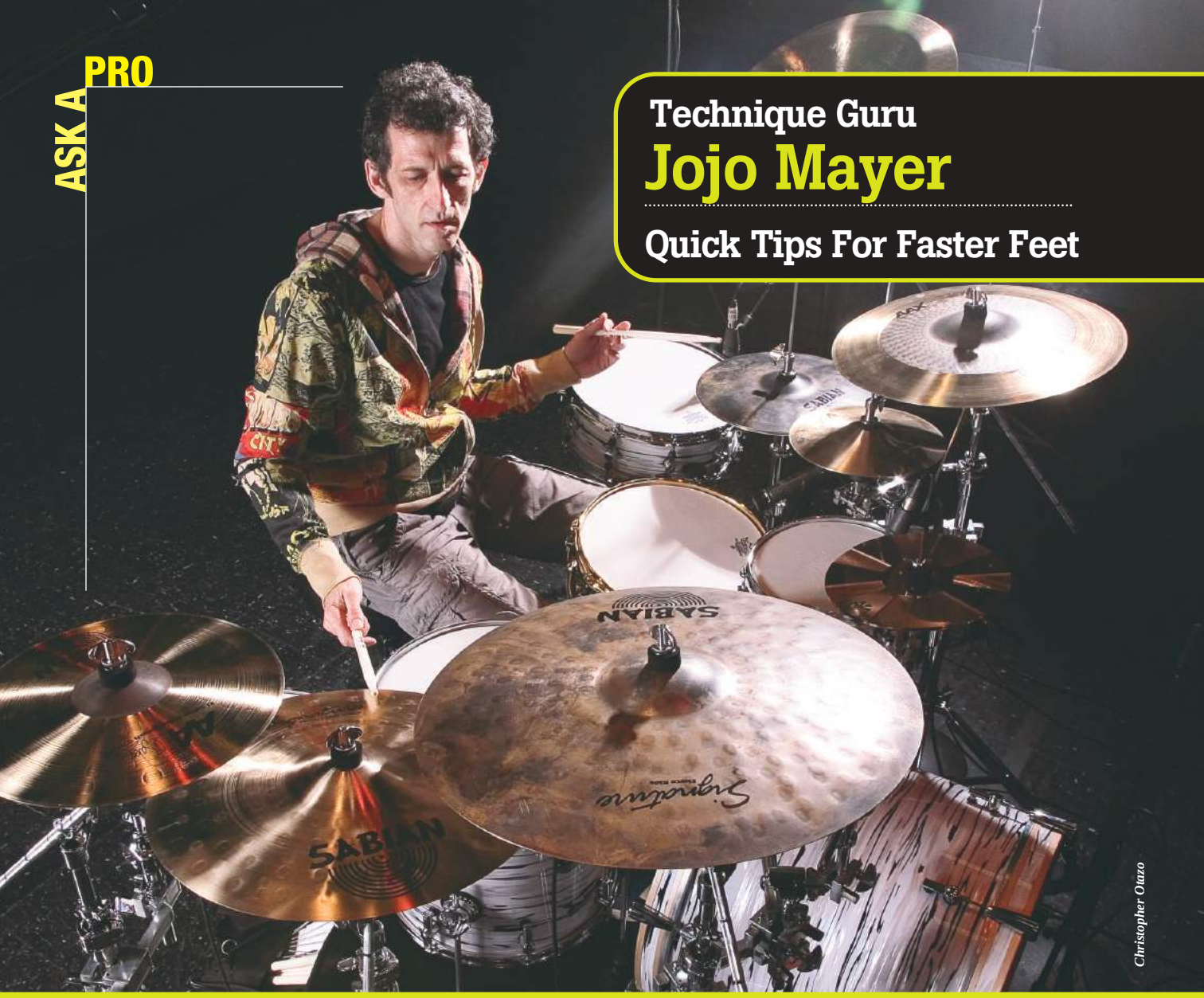
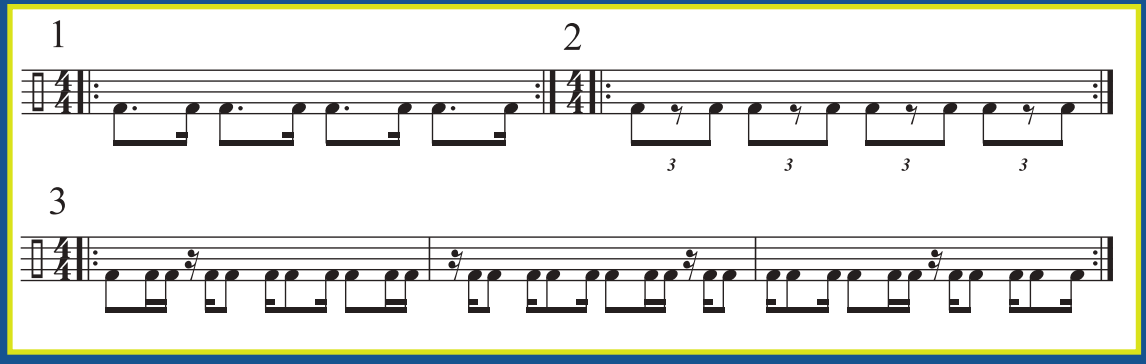
Quick Tips For Faster Feet



Christopher Otazo

I' m just finishing working through the first disc of your DVD set *Secret Weapons For The Modern Drummer*. (The Moeller method is working out great for me!) You do some killer footwork too. Any tips on how to develop fast foot doubles? And are you planning to produce a follow-up DVD that might include footwork?
Todd Gilbert

Thanks for the positive feedback, Todd. I' m glad my DVD renders to be helpful to you. Like for the hands, there are many different techniques you can use to execute doubles with your feet. But regardless of which technique you' re using, a good exercise to improve your doubles is to practice ostinatos that contain dotted-8th/16th notes or similar rhythms, such as sambas and shuffles. (See Examples 1–3 below.) You should play these at various tempos over an extended period of time. That' s about the best advice I can give to you at this time. Ever since *Secret Weapons* came out I' ve been flooded with requests for a sequel on foot technique. Hmm..sounds like a good idea!



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The Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Brian Chase

"Gold Lion" Drums

I've been playing drums for about four years, and I love the song "Gold Lion." When I checked mxtabs.com and a few other sites, I only found tabs for "Maps." All the other songs were only available for guitar/bass/etc. Any help would be much appreciated. Thanks much.
Sami

Hey, Sami. Great to hear from you, and thanks for your interest in the drum part for "Gold Lion." It's great that you took the extra step to email and ask a question. Excellent!

Okay, so, the drum part: When I play this song live, I use two tambourines, one mounted on the hi-hat and one mounted on the bass drum. The one mounted on the bass drum is played as if it was a cymbal, like a ride cymbal or another hi-hat.

The one on the hi-hat is played with the foot. (If you don't have a tambourine to mount on the bass drum you can just play the hi-hat instead; the tambourine mounted on the hi-hat is just to add extra "jingle.")

I'll go through the song and breakdown the key elements in each section:

1. Intro and first verse: "Boom-boom-bap!" Double the "bap!" with a foot stomp on the hi-hat.

2. Second verse ("Tell me what you saw"): Right hand playing the tambourine part on the tambourine that's mounted on the bass drum (or you can just play it on the hi-hat). On the recording, the part is playing 16th notes, but when I started to play this song live I liked doing 8th notes instead.

3. "Oo-oo" chorus: Switch to 16th notes on tambourine if they were previously doing 8ths. It's important to hit the open hi-hat on the "&s" of 1 and 3, with the floor tom doubling the snare backbeats on 2 and 4. (Variation: accented flams on the snare for the backbeats.)

4. Bridge: Lead guitar melody: Rock out on the cymbal.

5. Third verse ("Gold lion..."): Right hand moves to snare, playing light (ghosted) 16th notes and some rolls while hitting hard backbeats on 2 and 4. There is a clip of me doing it in the video for the song, at around 2:12, which you can see on YouTube. You can improvise this part as long as you hit the backbeats. There is another video of the song, taken from Lollapalooza, that has good parts for this section, and is good all around. *[There are a couple clips of this on YouTube; this is titled "Yeah Yeah Yeah's-Gold Lion-Lollapalooza".]*

6. Breakdown: Breakdown

7. Fourth verse ("Outside, inside"): Rock it back on the tambourine that's mounted on the bass drum. (For the live show I also stomp out 8ths on the hi-hat to get more sound going.) Check that Lollapalooza vid for good variations.

8. "Oo-oo" chorus: The "boom-boom-bap!" pattern again, but this time the bass drum "booms" are supplemented by hitting the floor tom and a half open hi-hat; the snare drum "baps!" are supplemented by hitting a crash cymbal.

9. Outro—lead guitar melody: Rock out on the cymbal, take it home!

That's the basic outline of the parts. You can also check the clip from The Late Show for a good presentation of how the drum part transitioned from the studio recording into the live show (Search "Goldlion-Letterman").

For all the fills and little stuff, especially in the live versions, well, you'll have to use your ears for those.

I play and practice to recordings all the time and work on learning what the drummer's doing. It's one of my favorite ways to practice.

If you have any more questions, don't hesitate to ask. And have fun with the part; it's a rocker!

QUICK BEATS

REO Speedwagon's Bryan Hitt

Hobbies/interests: Snowboarding, wakeboarding, ATV riding, camping, boating
Favorite album: Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon*
Favorite drink: Red wine
Favorite food: Seafood
Favorite junk food: Nachos
Favorite movie: *Oh Brother, Where Art Though*
Favorite TV show: *Jeopardy* and *Monday Night Football*
Vehicle I drive: Chevy Suburban
Place I'd like to visit: Africa
Musicians I would like to work with: Sting
Person I would like to talk to: Jesus
I wish I'd played drums on: "Imagine" by John Lennon
Biggest venue played: Fourth of July 1994 in Houston, Texas with REO and Buffalo Bayou, for 500,000 people
Most unusual venue played: Riverboat barge in Texas in 1966

Text and photos by Joe Perry

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Frank BRIGGS

Burning The Fuse!

"I wanted to become a great musician, not just a great drummer—there is a difference."

Frank Briggs is best known for his top-selling instructional book/DVD, *The Complete Modern Drum Set*. Now the LA-based drummer/educator exposes his jazz-fusion roots on his first solo recording, *China Ranch* (frankbriggs.com), on which he displays fat, loose, and powerful Tony Williams–style technique. Briggs has also recently recorded *Circus Of Sound* with OHM, a Southern California–based progressive rock fusion trio featuring former Megadeth guitarist Chris Poland and bassist Robertino Pagliari.

OHM allows Briggs the freedom to stretch and explore, which he does tastefully and with attitude. A disciple of fusion music, Briggs studied with legendary jazz drummer Jack DeJohnette to help gain insight into this advanced musical art form. "Jack taught me that time was internal," states Briggs, "that how tightly you hold a stick can change your sound and feel, and that it's always about the music. After studying with Jack, I wanted to become a great *musician*, not just a great drummer—there is a difference."

Briggs owns his own recording studio, where he composes and records most of his drum tracks. "I record myself all the time," he explains. "If something doesn't feel right, I play it again and again. You learn a lot in the process."

Briggs composed all ten tracks on *China Ranch* and describes his drumming as supportive. "This recording is all about the music," he says. "There is plenty of blowing, but in essence, the drums play a supportive *and* featured role."

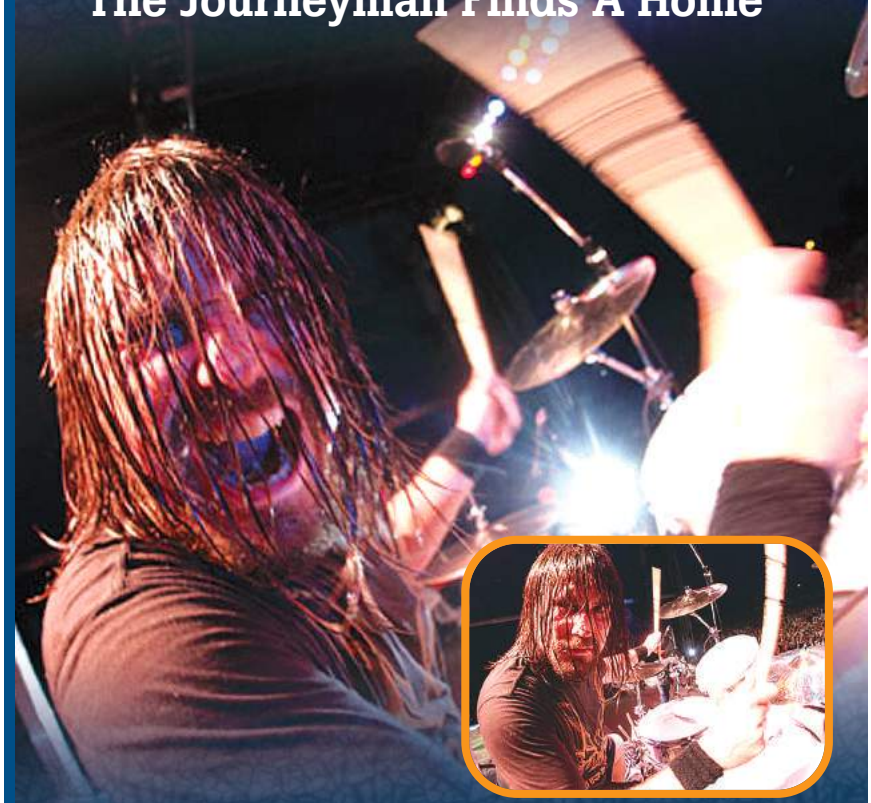
Briggs' drumming reflects the feel and musicality of a seasoned veteran of electric jazz. His compositional style is highly influenced by his musical idols, which include Tony Williams, Herbie Hancock, Weather Report, and Pat Metheny. Regarding his composing, Briggs notes, "I 'use' the keyboards for composing but don't really play. I usually start with chord progressions, and I seldom rely on theory. I sometimes spend months composing a tune."

Briggs is well versed in many musical styles, and he explains how that aspect has shaped his career: "I think it's helped me develop my own voice more than anything else," he says. "I draw from a lot of different sources in music and drumming, which has made me who I am. That approach has certainly advanced my musical ideas."

Mike Haid

Three Doors Down's Greg UPCHURCH

The Journeyman Finds A Home



After stints with Eleven, Chris Cornell, and Puddle Of Mudd, drummer Greg Upchurch has finally found a home. When he took over the drum chair in Three Doors Down in 2005, Upchurch was originally brought in as a hired gun. Now, three years and hundreds of shows later, Upchurch is an official member of the multi-platinum group. "They really felt like I brought something to the table," says Upchurch. "They said we'd love to have you as our drummer and be a band again."

Three Doors Down's latest, self-titled opus is a disc that churns on all cylinders, finding the band writing Southern-fried rock from the soul. Upchurch's drumming suggests an intense passion, as he earnestly bashes the hell out of his kit. "I do the best I can to give this band the biggest beat possible," Upchurch states. "I usually visualize John Bonham in my head."

One song from the group's new disc, "Feet In The Water," was built around an Upchurch groove, while tracks like "She Don't Want The World" offer up a diverse palette. "I used an electronic kit on one track, and on another I just used mallets on the toms," Upchurch recalls. "It doesn't really sound like Three Doors Down; there's no chorus, it builds instrumentally, and then it dies into nothing. It's more of a crescendo of music."

Other memorable drum cuts include the blues-inspired "Train" and the half-time/double-time "When It's Over." Recording these and the other tracks felt natural to Upchurch. "To be honest," he says, "my favorite cuts were the ones where it was obvious what I was going to play. Most of the time when I first heard the songs there was no doubt in my mind what they needed."

"I do the best I can to give this band the biggest beat possible."

When Three Doors Down brought Upchurch into the fold, they were getting much more than a seasoned studio cat. Hey, even Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page once commented on Upchurch's live prowess. "It's important for my band to see me busting my ass behind the kit, because everyone feeds off of that," Upchurch testifies. "It all comes from the drums. The drums are the beginning of the snowball effect; they set the tone for the whole thing. I never want to come off the stage not being exhausted. Without that, I don't feel like I've given a hundred and ten percent."

Steven Douglas Losey

The Walkmen's Matt BARRICK

Walking To His Own Beat

All drummers should add seeing The Walkmen's Matt Barrick playing "The Rat" live to their "bucket lists." Barrack's effort on the tune (from the Philadelphia– and New York–based indie quintet's 2004 album, *Bows & Arrows*) is a jaw-dropping exercise in precision and velocity. Whizzing by at around 200 bpm on especially spirited nights, Barrick propels the song with the hopped-up clatter of 16th notes on the hi-hat (which seem like 64th notes) and a manic succession of Keith Moon–styled fills.

Simply put, it's an awesome experience.

As striking a centerpiece as "The Rat" has become during The Walkmen's live shows—and as great a showcase as it is for Barrick—he says the band has probably outgrown such frantic tendencies. "There's certainly nothing as fast as 'The Rat,'" the drummer says about the material the band is working on for their next album. "I would be surprised if the band were to come out with something in that vein right now. That's the kind of thing we were doing when we were younger and more energetic." [laughs]

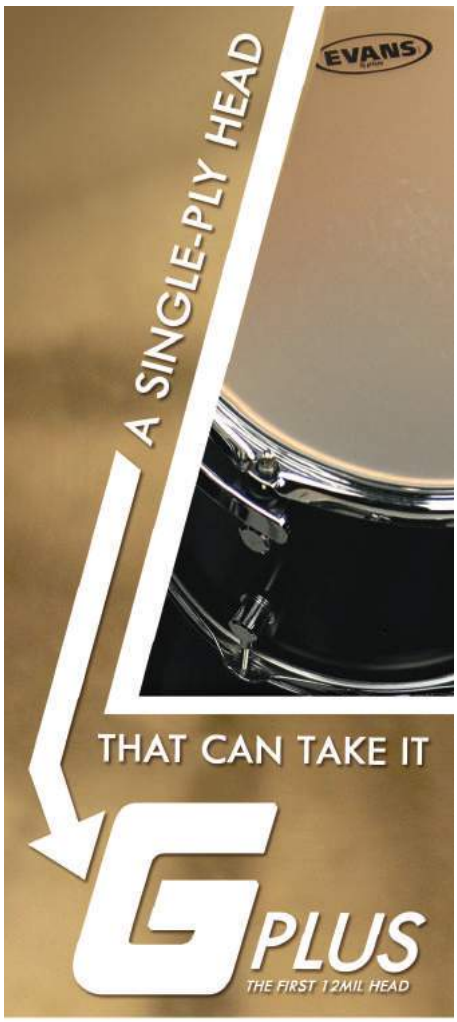
"The Rat" is a thrill ride, to be sure. But it only offers a partial glimpse into Barrick's m.o. behind the kit, one that usually eschews pro forma timekeeping. His approach, like his setup—a four-piece WFL kit with one crash-ride and a hi-hat featuring two old tambourines fastened above the clutch—is sparse yet unique. A "beat" sometimes consists of nothing more than Barrick thumping out a Morse Code-like rhythm on the floor tom, interrupted by the odd accent on the rack tom or cymbal crash.

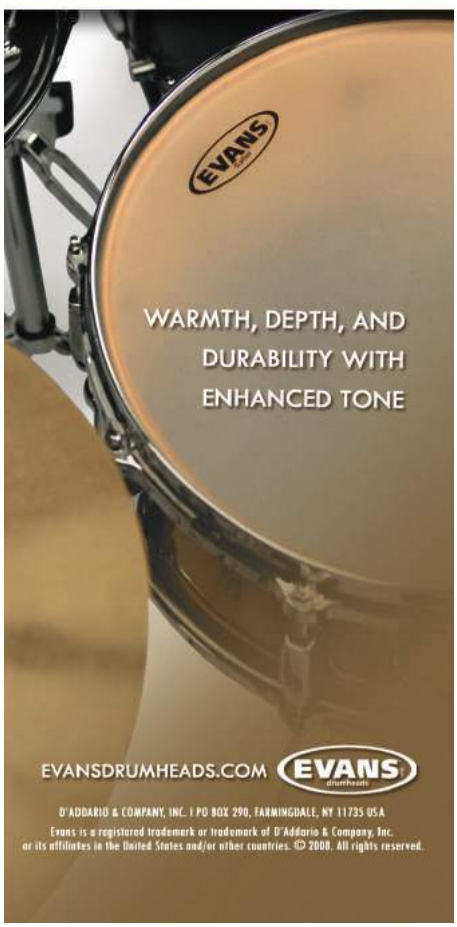
Even Barrick's straight beats usually feature a twist. An extended, drum-less pause mid-song adds tension to "The Rat," while a new track called "The Blue Route" finds the drummer alternating between a steady groove and peculiarly placed punctuations on the floor tom and hi-hat.

"We're split between Philly and New York," Barrick shares, "so [keyboardist-bassist] Walt Martin is the de facto drummer up there, and he comes up with some off-the-wall ideas that sometimes creep into my parts. He'll come up with drum parts when the songs are in their infancy. And we'll build and find our way to the dynamics from there—sometimes it takes an afternoon, sometimes a few weeks.

"And sometimes all it takes is a very spare part," Marrick concludes. "Then again, sometimes a song needs something more over the top, like on 'The Rat.'"

Patrick Berkery





Bryan KEELING

Keeping It Real With Shooter Jennings

Shooter Jennings drummer Bryan Keeling has always been a team player. Whether playing with Pink or Dionne Warwick, his drumming has always fit the vibe, and he's always strived to give the music exactly what it needed. "When I first joined Shooter's band," he says, "I put six hours of Waylon [Jennings, Shooter's famous father] in my iPod and listened to Richie Albright [Waylon's original drummer and right-hand man] for about two months," says Keeling. "I thought it would put Shooter into a comfort zone. When I finally got it, I fused it with everything else that I do."

Keeling grew up with a mishmash of styles, drummers, and grooves. He readily suggests that he can jam in practically every genre, and he has a thick stew of influences to thank. "I grew up playing everything from jazz to rock," he remembers. "A friend of mine introduced me to Jeff Beck and The Brecker Brothers. And I listened to Zappa, Vinnie Colaiuta, Neil Peart, and a slew of others."

One particularly diverse drummer that caught Keeling's attention was Simon Phillips. "When I first heard Jeff Beck's *There And Back* and the first Judas Priest record Simon played on, I couldn't believe it," Keeling says. "I then saw him on the *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert* TV show with Stanley Clarke. I became obsessed with everything he did."

For Shooter Jennings' latest opus, *The Wolf*, Keeling was armed with experience and the confidence gained from having played hundreds of shows with Shooter and the band. "*The Wolf* was the best recording experience I've had so far," he says. "When I would improvise and fill, it was way more appropriate for the genre and the band than on the first two records."

Keeling has developed many ideas about playing the drums, and he's learned many valuable lessons along the way, but he's especially proud of what he offers in a live situation. "No matter what I'm doing, if the audience can connect, then I know I'm being real," he enthuses. "Good drumming takes dynamics and appropriateness. If I'm listening, I can hit those moments, and that's what makes the live experience come to life."

Steven Douglas Losey

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UPDATE **NEWS**

Nate Morton just completed the *Rock The Cradle* TV show and a tour with Grammy-nominated singer Paulino Rubio before heading to Europe to tour with Thin Lizzy.

Flo Mounier is currently on tour with Cryptopsy supporting their latest release, *The Unspoken King*.

Lovin' Spoonful drummer **Mike Arturi** recently completed eight tracks on the upcoming release from New York rocker and former Ace Frehley/Sebastian Bach guitarist Richie Scarlet.

Daren Pfeifer is touring with Earshot in support of their new record, *The Silver Lining*.

Shane Gaalaas is back on the road with Japanese superstars B'z.

Matty Amendola has released his debut solo album, *=ecstasy*, where he sings and plays drums, guitar, and bass.

Montez Coleman is on The Roy Hargrove Quintet's latest, *Earfood*.

Pat Mastelotto is on *Confession And Release* by Moonbound, along with drummers **Arne Neurand**, **Jeff Colier**, and **Sven Petri**. Pat can also be heard on No-Man's *Schoolyard Ghosts*, featuring Porcupine Tree's Tim Bowness and Steve Wilson. (PT's **Gavin Harrison** appears on one track.) Finally, Mastelotto can be heard on his King Crimson bandmate Tony Levin's *Stick Man* (also featuring **Scott Schorr**), his ex-Crim buddy Trey Gunn's *Music For Pictures*, and Tuner's *Totem*.

Daniel Denis is on the reissue of leading progressive rock band Univers Zero's self-titled 1977 debut.

Harvey Sorgen plays on Pete Levin's *Certified Organic*.

Matt Wilson is on *Gracefullee*, by fifteen-year-old alto sax player Grace Kelly and alto legend Lee Konitz.

Ricky Lawson is on The Morris Brothers' latest, *One Less Dream*.

Gene Ambo

Legendary R&B drummer **James Gadson** is on Amos Lee's new Blue Note CD, *Last Days At The Lodge*.

Eric Frates is on blues/rock guitarist Pat Travers' live CD *Stick With What You Know—Live In Europe*.

Former Humble Pie drummer **Jerry Shirley** is on Deborah Bonham's US album debut, *Duchess*. Deborah is the sister of late Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham; her nephew **Jason Bonham** is featured on the track "Hold On."

Billy Cobham has a new solo CD out called *Fruit From The Loom*. You can also hear him play some burnin' latin grooves with Cuban group Asere on the new CD *De Cuba Y De Panama*.

Brian Blade is on Rebecca Martin's *The Growing Season*.

One of the busiest drummers out today, **Chuck Tilley,** is simultaneously touring with Alabama vocalist Randy Owen and pop singer/songwriter Richard Marx.

Congratulations to **Chris Adler** and wife Julie on the birth of their daughter, McKenzie Cyr Adler.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Idris Muhammad (R&B great): 11/13/39
Billy Hart (post-bop master): 11/29/40
Pete Best (early Beatles): 11/21/41
Floyd Sneed (Three Dog Night): 11/22/43
Les DeMerle (Transfusion): 11/4/46
David Garibaldi (Tower Of Power): 11/4/46
Bev Bevan (ELO): 11/25/46
Alphonse Mouzon (jazz/fusion great): 11/21/48
Clem Burke (Blondie): 11/24/55
Adam Nussbaum (jazz master): 11/29/55
Matt Sorum (Guns N' Roses/Velvet Revolver): 11/19/60
Charlie Benante (Anthrax): 11/27/62
Mike Bordin (Ozzy Osbourne): 11/27/62
Matt Cameron (Pearl Jam): 11/28/62
Rick Allen (Def Leppard): 11/1/63
Antonio Sanchez (Pat Metheny): 11/1/71
Keith Carlock (Steely Dan): 11/29/71
Travis Barker (Blink-182): 11/14/75
Thomas Pridgen (The Mars Volta): 11/23/83

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Booker T. & The MG's' **Al Jackson Jr.** was born on 11/27/34, **Yogi Horton** on 11/25/59. **Eric Carr** passed away on 11/24/91. **Tony Thompson** was born on 11/15/54 and passed away on 11/12/03.

11/23/55: Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers record *At The Café Bohemia*, with trumpeter Kenny Dorham, tenor saxophonist Hank Mobley, and pianist Horace Silver.

11/28/74: John Lennon makes what would be his last-ever live performance, alongside Elton John (with **Nigel Olsson** on drums) at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

11/25/76: After sixteen years of touring, The Band (with **Levon Helm**) calls it quits and plays San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom. The concert event will be filmed by Martin Scorcese and titled *The Last Waltz*.

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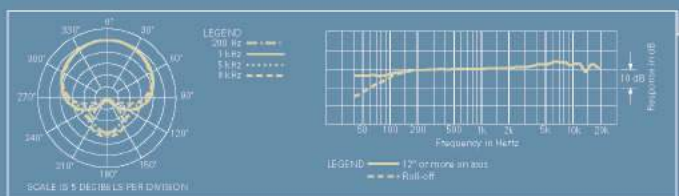

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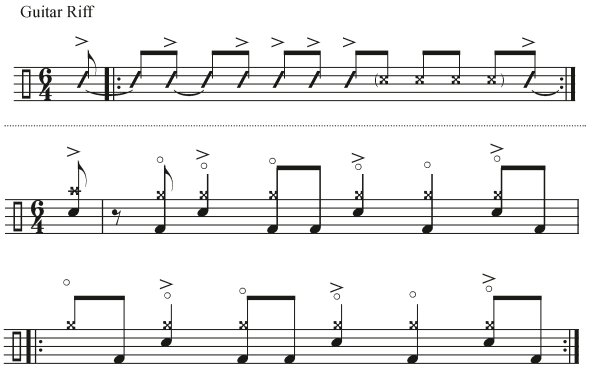
IT'S QUESTIONABLE

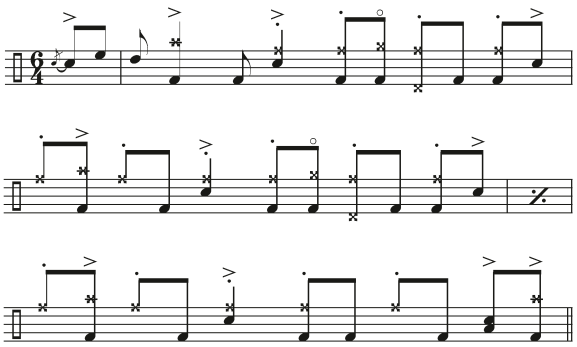
Matt Cameron's Quirky Soundgarden Beat

I've been trying to transcribe a Soundgarden sonic puzzle, and it's driving me insane! The track is "Room A Thousand Years Wide," from the band's 1991 album Badmotorfinger. During the chorus Matt Cameron plays a quarter-note ride pattern on the bell while his left hand does some crazy independence that's mirroring the guitar riff. I can't figure out where beat 1 is after the fill going into the chorus. Could someone please help me?
Clint

Matt Cameron is a master at making odd-meter riffs feel smooth. In this particular track, which is in 6/4, Matt switches up his beat from a driving rock groove to the off-kilter pattern you're referring to, in order to provide some contrast between the sections. To understand what Matt's doing, you first have to internalize the repetitive guitar riff. Here's the guitar rhythm, followed by Matt's opening beat.

Guitar Riff



The guitar pattern continues into the next section of the song, even though Matt changes up his groove. Now his beat locks in with some of the offbeat accents with his kick and snare, while the left hand throws in an open hi-hat note during one of the gaps. The barline-crossing fill at the beginning makes this section sound even more "odd." (0:51)

Zildjian Zilco Originals

I have a pair of Zilco hi-hats that came with a drumset I purchased in 1967. Sources on the Internet say Zilcos with the semi-circular markings are from the 1920s/1930s, but I'm not sure how reliable those sources are. The cymbals are hammered with what appears to be a maker's mark or some other kind of insignia above the word Zilco. The cymbals are $13^{3}/_{16}$" in diameter. What's the history of these cymbals?
Patrick Kelly

We referred your question to John King, product communications manager at Zildjian. Here's his response: "The Zilco trademark, which included a sword and Arabic writing just above the Zilco text, was initiated in June of 1930 and was primarily used on second-quality Zildjian cymbals. These cymbals were supplied to various drum companies to use within their complete drumkit setups.

"This type of availability continued until 1968, when Zilco cymbals became its own line of cost-effective cymbals. The Zilco line did utilize Zildjian's famous alloy, but in order to keep costs down, the company did not apply the hammering process. This 'new' Zilco line offered three factory-matched setups called 'The Starter,' 'The Rocker,' and 'The Swinger.' The lines were available until 1970, when Avedis Zildjian decided that he no longer wanted to offer second-quality cymbals.

"If your Zilco cymbal does have hammer marks on its surface, it could date back to as early as 1930. But there is no particular marking within the Zilco trademark that allows us to date the cymbal more accurately."

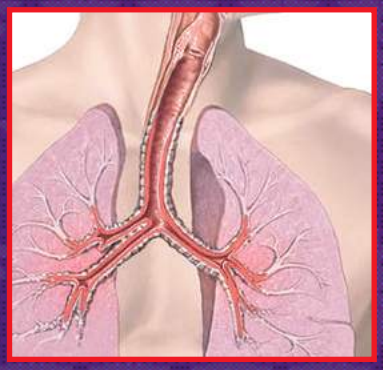
The Doctor Is In

by Asif Khan, M.D.

Editor's note: This mini-department has been established to address your questions related to drumming and health.

Dealing With Asthma

Over the past few years, I've become more and more short of breath when I start playing. A friend said that I needed more exercise. But now I'm wheezing and am exhausted at the end of practice or a show. Is this asthma? Do I need to take this seriously? I also moved into a new house about the same time I began to feel like this.
Mike Koenig



Using an inhaler before playing can help drummers with exercise-induced asthma.

This is a pretty complicated case. Progressive shortness of breath and wheeze are insidious signs. There are many causes of wheezing, but we will focus on a more common cause, asthma, which is a reversible airways disease. There are fourteen main types of asthma, and even more subtypes.

Intrinsic (non-allergic) asthma is caused by anything except an allergy. It may be caused by an infection, stress, laughter, exercise, cold air, food preservatives, or a host of other factors. Extrinsic (allergic) asthma is caused by the immune system's response to inhaled allergens such as pollen, animal dander, or dust mite particles. Other types of asthma include nocturnal, silent, cough-variant, mixed, childhood, adult-onset, seasonal, exercise-induced (sport), allergic, steroid resistant, and occupational.

Unless you've had asthma since childhood, most drummers usually fall into the exercise-induced, allergic, or occupational categories. Allergic asthma is often associated with a running and blotchy nose, itchy eyes, sneezing, and coughing. This type of asthma is on the rise in the US and can be treated with allergy shots and medications. Occupational asthma occurs due to a trigger at work, like dust, chemicals, or smoke. Symptoms usually get better when you leave the environment.

Exercise-induced is self-explanatory; in this case, a drummer begins to experience symptoms 10–20 minutes after playing starts. Precautions include using a bronchodilator inhaler, like albuterol, just prior to the activity, as well as deep nasal breathing until the body feels warmed up. You probably have this type, coupled with allergic asthma.

I would recommend diagnosing this with a lung function test while at rest, and after you exercise on a treadmill for fifteen minutes. I would also recommend taking the albuterol fifteen minutes prior to any drumming in order to open your lungs. You should also have your doctor check for allergies with a skin test.

Dr. Asif Khan is a board-certified internist, specializing in allergy and immunology, with a private practice in northeast Ohio. He also directs the nonprofit organization Passion And Profession (www.passionandprofession.com), which focuses on career counseling and education. Dr. Khan has been an avid drummer for twenty years and is currently performing with Johnny Hi-Fi (ww.johnnyhi-fi.com).

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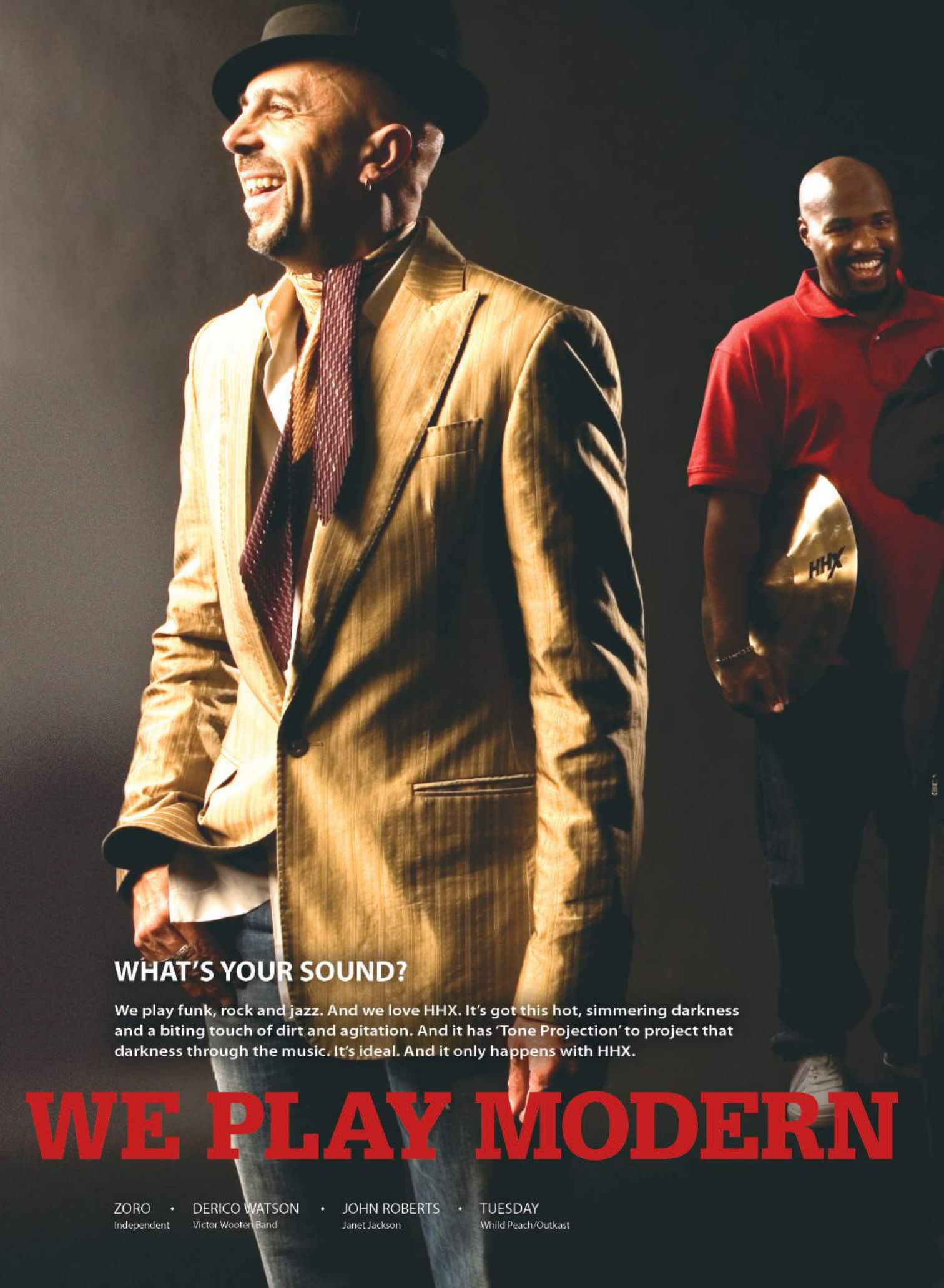

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Combination of raised pitch and low tone adds up to a simmering sound.

HHX IS MODERN DARK.

Innovative 'Tone Projection' design shoots simmering hot sound through any music.

HHX is darkness with a difference: it's a hot, simmering sound that projects through the music… any music, from jazz and funk to rock and metal. With an innovative 'Tone Projection' design and models including the O-Zone and X-Treme crashes, HHX is what Modern Dark sound is all about.

SABIAN

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BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

Zildjian

ZBT And ZHT Effects Cymbals

by Martin Patmos

Zildjian recently introduced several new effects models to its ZBT and ZHT lines of cymbals. The ZBT line is made of a B8 alloy, which is bronze containing 8% tin. Added to the current ZBT lineup are a 20" crash-ride, a 16" China, and a 12" splash, which expands the color possibilities of this entry-level series to that of a more extensive professional line.

The ZHT series is made with a B12 alloy—bronze with a 12% tin content. New to this series are 8" and 10" China-splashes, launching a new design not only within the ZHT line, but within the entire Zildjian cymbal palette.

ZBT 20" Crash-Ride

With even lathing and hammer marks ringed around the surface, the new 20" crash-ride joins the ZBT line as a second ride option and as the largest crash in the series. This new cymbal produces everything you could want from such a cymbal, making it a nice multi-purpose offering at the entry level. After a big fill, crashing the edge of this beast causes a great wash of sound that will fill any room. Playing with the shaft of the stick on the edge brought out more of the initial lows in the cymbal's harmonics, while crashing on the surface with the tip resulted in a more pointed attack. Either way you hit it, the swell of sound was more than ample, creating a full, bright crash with a long decay, as one would expect from a full crash.

As a ride, the 20" cymbal played quite well across the surface, exhibiting good stick definition, a bright ringing tone, and a lot of volume. Surprisingly, there wasn't too much build-up, and I never felt that my ride pattern was getting lost or that the cymbal was out of control. The bell performed nicely, maintaining separation from the rest of the cymbal for distinct pattern playing. Sonically, this cymbal complements the regular ZBT ride. But it can easily stand on its own, making it a nice crash and ride option for drummers on a budget.

ZBT 16" China

There's a lot of pang in the new ZBT 16" China. This cymbal has a bright, pointed, and somewhat classic China sound. Crashing on its edge brought out the full pang of the cymbal, while the inner bow offered sharp, tangy sounds that were great for accents and patterns. China cymbals aren't for everyone, but any drummer looking for a reasonably priced model should check this cymbal out.

ZBT 12" Splash

I'm not usually a big fan of 12" splash cymbals. But in the right context, the ZBT 12" splash should prove to be a welcome voice. It has a bright, full sound with a little weight, but it's fast and transparent enough to keep it from sounding like a tiny crash. I can see this

cymbal working well in a rock or metal context, as well as in the practice room.

ZHT China-Splashes

The ZHT China-splashes are new cymbals for Zildjian, exclusive to the ZHT line. Available in 8" and 10" models, these cymbals feature a unique design with a squared-off bell and a steep profile. The sound is just what you' d expect—a sharp splash with a slightly exotic, China-type timbre. Pitched roughly a third apart, both models responded quickly, with a fast decay. They perform exceptionally well as splashes or accent cymbals. To my ear, using these in combination with a regular splash offered a nice contrast that highlighted their interesting character.

The ZHT China-splashes also blended well with different cymbal types—those made of B8 bronze, as well as those crafted from B20 alloys. As a result, these China-splashes work well as versatile accent cymbals that could find a home within beginner, intermediate, or professional drummers' setups.

Conclusion

Zildjian made these cymbals with two things in mind: price and sound. The new ZBTs should find favor with drummers just starting out, on a budget, or favor rock and metal styles. As for the ZHT China-splashes, I' d recommend them to any drummer looking to expand their accent-cymbal choices. They' re certainly worth a listen.

THE NUMBERS

ZBT 20" Crash-Ride: $188
ZBT 16" China: $132
ZBT 12" Splash: $90
ZHT 10" China-Splash: $121
ZHT 8" China-Splash: $101
www.zildjian.com

QUICK LOOKS

The Slapstik

by John Emrich

Drumsticks and mallets are constantly being reinvented, modified, and sold as the "next cool thing." But it's only every once in a while that something comes along that actually changes the way you approach playing the drums. The Slapstik is one of those products.

The main body of this stick is made of hickory and measures around 15". Extending out of the barrel-shaped tip is a flexible plastic neck and 1½" of hard plastic that's shaped like a trident missile. This tip is designed to flex up and down as you play, allowing you to play on the top and bottom of cymbals and percussion without having to adjust your stroke.

Slapstiks are sold individually, as they are intended to be used in your dominant (lead) hand, with a regular stick in the other. Construction quality is very good. The finish is very smooth, and the flexible tip seems to hold up well.

I'll admit, this thing looked a little strange when I first opened the box. But as soon as I held it in my hand I started coming up with new tricks and approaches to hitting everything from drums and percussion to cymbals and assorted homemade instruments.

The company's Web site features some really nice videos featuring jazz drummers Yotam Rosenbaum and Paul Wertico. So it was easy to figure out some ways to use the Slapstick in very little time. Once I worked out some of these techniques, I started testing them out on various instruments in my collection. What I discovered was that it all comes down to angles. Once I found the proper angle, I could simply flutter a glancing blow across the edge of the instruments.

Playing with a pair of Slapsticks was a blast, producing some very interesting results. And In the studio, I found them quite useful. For instance, at a recent session I needed to play a quick 16th-note pattern on a wood block, while adding some triangle strikes at the same time. The tempo was a little too quick to execute the wood block part with one hand using a standard stick. But when I used the Slapstik in my right hand—after a few adjustments to the angle of the wood block—I was ready to go. Normally I would have done two passes to record the wood block and triangle tracks. But with the Slapstick I could do them both at once. And it worked!

More information about the Slapstik can be found at www.theslapstik.com. List price for one stick is $9.95.

SJC Drums

Custom Woodhoop Kit

by Chap Ostrander

My introduction to SJC Drums was when I picked up this review kit. I then looked on the company's Web site to see what other drums they offer. After surfing for a couple minutes, I thought to myself, What don't they offer? Practically every kit they make is one-of-a-kind. They offer many different types of lugs, hoops, shell configurations...and the list goes on.

SJC Drums was founded by two brothers in 2000. The company now has a long list of artists, as well as many different kits in varying looks. They are positioned right on the cusp of top-rate drum technology and cutting-edge fashion.

Weathered Look, Fresh Sound

The wrap finish on the drums is called Copper Rust. The finish on the wood hoops for the bass and toms is Black Oxide. These hoops are built to extend so that they cover the drumhead collar. The lugs are teardrop-style, and they are aligned between top and bottom. (SJC also offers different degrees of offset lugs.)

The hardware on this kit is "weathered," which has an almost brushed-pewter look and feel. The rack toms have six lugs, and the floor tom has eight. The bass drum and snare each have ten lugs per head. The 6-ply toms have double 45° bearing edges, with one ply flat at the apex. This cut is said to deliver an open and freely resonating tone. SJC employs a slightly flatter bearing edge on their 8-ply bass drums. The company offers their customers a choice of drumheads, and then they cut the edges to work with those heads. The toms are supplied with Gauger RIMS mounts.

The floor tom has its legs mounted directly on the shell, but it still has plenty of resonance. This drum was very deep and full, and the wood hoops gave it a warm character. The toms came with Evans G2 Clear batter heads.

The bass drum on this kit is a monster. It has a clean look with no hardware mounts on the shell, other than the lugs and spurs. The bass heads are an Evans EMAD2 batter and a Fiberskyn PS3 front with an SJC shield logo (they have different

THE DETAILS

Our review kit came with a 20x24 bass drum (oh yeah!), 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, and a 16x16 floor tom with legs. The bass and toms are maple, six plies for the toms and eight plies for the kick. The $6^1/_2$x14 snare has a steel shell.

styles) plus a 6" port.

The snare is another animal. The shell is steel, but it looks like antique brass or bronze. It has a center section with large hammer marks, while the upper and lower sections are smooth. This drum has ten chrome tube lugs, die-cast hoops, a Trick throw-off, and a standard twenty-strand set of snares. It came with an Evans ST Dry batter head and a Hazy Snare Side resonant head, which are great choices for this naturally live-sounding metal drum.

The rack toms sounded full and resonant, thanks to the RIMS mounts. The drums responded nicely, and there was good tonal separation between all the toms. The floor tom sounded huge and deep, and the bass drum was absolute thunder.

All hardware on this kit, including the RIMs mounts, has a "brushed" look.

I haven' t worked much with wood hoops, and I thought that these might be hard to play around. That was not the case. The hoops felt solid, and they produced clear rimshots.

The snare was amazing. It was very responsive at all volume levels, and gave off a clear " crack" when I leaned into it. This was a very satisfying drum to play. It' s the kind of snare that alters how you play because it feels good to do so.

As Custom As Custom Gets

SJC offers many unique kits other than what we experienced. The company is quick to point out that even though they have their own ideas about drum building, their first goal is to satisfy their customers' needs. So any type of drumkit that you can dream up, they will build. They can make drums out of any type of wood (maple, birch, mahogany, etc.), acrylic, many different metals, carbon fiber, and so on. They also make unique shell types, like chamber, hybrid, split, solid, and steam-bent. They offer any number of plies, but their recommended configuration is 6-ply toms and an 8-ply kick.

I was truly impressed by these drums, for two reasons. First, they sounded great. And second, they looked great. The design of these drums portrays a theme, a consistent look..a complete package.

THE NUMBERS

The reviewed kit sells for $3,935 directly from SJC. The snare is available from Sam Ash for $449.99.

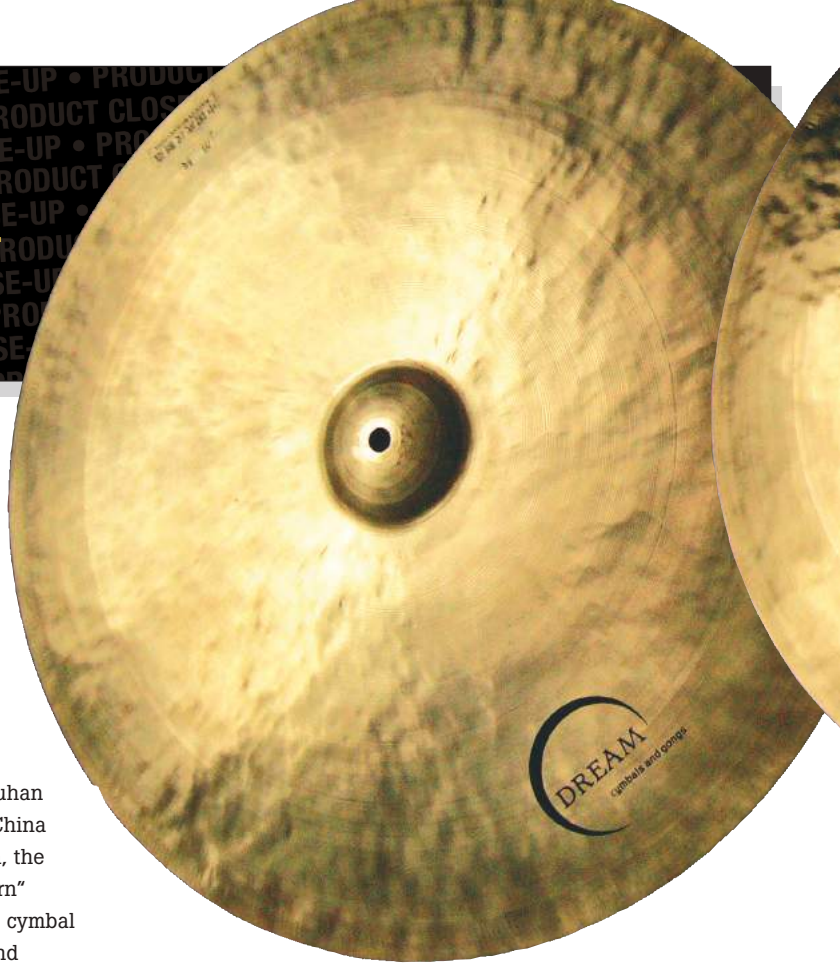
www.sjcdrums.com

Listen

Dream

Energy, Vintage Bliss, And Small Bell Flat Additions

by Dave Previ



Dream cymbals came to my attention in 2006, when a friend returned from a trade show with a couple of them. He said, " They sound great, and they' re really affordable!" So I jumped at the opportunity to check out these new additions—the heavy rock–oriented Energy series, the super thin vintage Blisses, and the innovative Small Bell Flat rides—to report to all of you about how they sound.

Brief Background

Before we start playing the cymbals, let' s look at Dream' s background. Dream cymbals are made in the Wuhan region of China, an area famous for its gongs, bells, and China cymbals. After visiting some cymbal makers in this region, the guys at Dream decided to train them in the art of " Western" cymbal construction. As a result, each handcrafted Dream cymbal is a fusion of ancient Chinese gong–making techniques and Western–style cymbal making.

The original Dream catalog consisted of two series: Bliss and Contact. Both of those lines feature fairly thin cymbals, with the Contacts being the heavier of the two. Now the company has expanded their product line further, with paper–thin Vintage Bliss crash–rides, a complete heavy Energy series, and huge 24" Small Bell Flat rides in Bliss and Contact weights. Each of these products exhibits quality craftsmanship, as well as a unique sound. And all of them possess a distinctly " Chinese" trashy wash that rumbles underneath each stick attack.

Vintage Bliss Crash/Rides

The Vintage Bliss line was created to emulate vintage jazz cymbals. They' re available as 17", 18", 19", 20", and 22" crash/rides. The long and narrow hammer marks on these cymbals remind me of the few coveted handmade Italian Spizzichino cymbals that I' ve seen over the years. They' re also fairly flat, with barely any curvature to the bow. These cymbals are thin and react quickly to the stick. Ride patterns and crash accents have their own sound, which makes for a complex cymbal. At higher volumes and faster tempos, the stick attack tends to wash out. And the bell sound resonates through the entire cymbal, rather than jumping out from the top.

When playing the 17", I found it difficult to hear my ride patterns due to the prominent gong–like wash. This cymbal did, however, have a nice low crash sound with a medium decay. I could see using this cymbal when pushing a sax, trumpet, or guitar solo to its climax. On the 18", I had to search for the sweet spot to get a

Vintage Bliss crash/rides

THE NUMBERS

Vintage Bliss
17" Crash/Ride: $164
18" Crash/Ride: $189
19" Crash/Ride: $199
20" Crash/Ride: $204
22" Crash/Ride: $259

Energy
14" Hi-Hats: $359
16" Crash: $199
18" Crash: $239
20" Crash/Ride: $309
20" Ride: $335
22" Crash/Ride: $415
22" Ride: $435
24" Bliss Small Bell Flat Ride: $449
24" Contact Small Bell Flat Ride: $529
www.dreamcymbals.com

All Energy series cymbals (right) feature a raw unlathed bell, while the 24" Contact and Bliss Small Bell flat rides (left) are mammoth plates with a controlled sound.

clear stick sound for riding. Otherwise, it was almost as if I was hitting with the shoulder of the stick, rather than tapping with the tip. So again, I could see using this cymbal more as a crash than as a ride.

The 19" and 20" Vintage Blisses were the sweetest, with the best all-around sound. Complete with a rich stick attack, a controlled wash, and a powerful shoulder crash, these cymbals proved to be the stars of the line. The 22" has a resonant stick sound on top of a low, wobbly wash. These crash/rides would make for a nice left-side ride or a big crash to the right of your main ride cymbal.

Energy Series

These cymbals make up the newest series from Dream. Hand-hammered with unlathed bells, they have more weight than the other series, giving them a louder sound. Geared more for pop and rock, these cymbals are more versatile than the Vintage Bliss line. They would work in a jazz situation as well as in rock, Latin, fusion, R&B, or country.

I tested the 18" and 22" crash/rides on a rock gig. After a couple songs, I felt like I should' ve brought the 22" ride, as the crash/ride didn' t offer enough stick ping to drive the music. I was hoping that I could get a two-for-one deal, because of the crash/ride name. But it didn' t prove to be an ideal ride at higher volumes. It did, however, work well as a crash cymbal. The trashy sound conducive to the entire Dream catalog added an interesting texture in quiet sections of tunes, and it exploded when needed for big chorus accents. The 18" crash/ride responded nicely to any energy put into it, soft or heavy. Its decay wasn' t too quick, either.

The 20" and 22" rides maintain a clear stick sound at all volumes, with a low wash that builds with playing intensity. Again, that ancient Chinese gong-like sound was very evident in these cymbals when pushed with the shoulder of the stick.

Across the Energy series, I felt that the bigger the cymbal, the better the sound. The 14" hi-hats sounded a little generic, as did the 16" crash; they just didn' t have the complexity of the bigger cymbals. And their sustained ring was a little uninspiring.

But what surprised me from this line was the clarity of the bell on the rides and crash/rides. It was easy to play a clear and loud " ding," regardless of where you hit them.

24" Bliss And Contact Small Bell Flat Rides

Dream has invented a new concept with their Small Bell Flat rides. The idea is to have a defined flat-ride sound, with the added bonus of a bell. Typically the flatness of flat rides removes much of the cymbal' s wash. The Contact 24" Small Bell Flat ride has deeper lathing than the Bliss version, giving it a heavier and more powerful stick sound. The wash of the Contact is a little more present then your typical flat ride, but it could be removed by placing a few pieces of tape on the bottom surface. The 24" Bliss has a sweet woody stick sound that would complement jazz vocals very well. The bells on these rides are unique-sounding and give that extra accent sound that other flat rides are missing.

For Whom?

Compared to entry-level cymbals of other manufacturers, Dream cymbals have much more professional sonic qualities for the same, or even lower, price. Their sound is unique, which would bring complexity to any drummer' s collection. Parents buying cymbals for their child' s first drumset should seriously consider Dream for their affordability and high-quality sounds. While many young drummers who decide to get serious about music eventually grow out of their first set of cymbals, Dream cymbals have the potential to last a whole career. And for professional drummers who already have a collection of cymbals, adding a Dream ride, crash, or crash/ride would add depth to your existing arsenal. And it won' t cost much to do so.

Drumplates

Junior Pro 2 Series

by Chap Ostrander

Drumplates is a system for drums that makes the setup process easy and fast. We had a look at the Junior Pro 2 series. This package is comprised of two sets of specially treated plastic and carbon fiber panels. These panels are held together by Velcro strips. When connected, the entire setup gives you 5'x6$^{1}/_{2}$' section of floor space, which is plenty of room for a standard-size kit.

The idea behind Drumplates is that you set up your drums as you normally would, but on the plates. Once the drums are in position, you remove the backing from a sticker on the bottom of the U-shaped plastic blocks and place them semi-permanently. When you want to pack up the Drumplates, you can remove the blocks, leaving the Velcro backings in place.

In use, we found that not only do the Drumplates allow you to have a consistent setup each time you play, they also brighten the sound of the kit because of their reflective, shiny surface. They also added resonance and depth to my drum tone.

I found the Drumplates easy to work with. Everything fell into place quickly once I had the blocks positioned. The hi-hat and bass drum blocks utilize a round patch as a base for the blocks. This allows for some tweaking of their positioning. The system also comes with a set of numbered stickers so you can label the blocks and your stands. This makes the setup process even easier.

THE NUMBERS

The **Junior Pro Series 2** Drumplate pack, which comes with two plates and twenty positioning blocks, lists for $549. A more affordable **JP1** pack ($349), as well as more elaborate systems like the **S-Pro** ($975), **RS-Pro** ($1,295), and **NCP-New Custom Pro** ($2,500), are also available.
www.drumplates.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH
by Michael Dawson

TAMA

6x14 WARLORD ATHENIAN

HOW'S IT SOUND?

WHAT'S IT COST? **$1,199**

For a metal drum, the Warlord Athenian snare has one of the thickest tones you'll likely ever come across. Maybe it's because of the 1-mm brass shell, or the "Resonant Sound Edge," which is basically a bearing edge that's been folded over to create an air chamber. Or maybe there's some ancient magic hiding in those big Swarovski crystals. Either way, this snare sounds very dense and punchy, across all tunings. With that in mind, I wouldn't suggest using this one for symphonic etudes or classical excerpts, or even high-speed bebop, where you need a snare with razor-sharp attack. But the Athenian is perfect if you want a really fat sound that's also clean and precise, like what Steve Gadd made famous on Paul Simon's "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover." This drum has a unique pre-EQ'ed quality (like what you'd get if you added a couple strips of gaffer's tape on the batter head). But at the same time, it has a lot of ringing overtones. It's a very interesting blend of seemingly contradictory qualities that could work really well if you like the punch of a heavily muffled drum, but don't want to sacrifice resonance and sustain. **www.tama.com**

Listen

To hear this drum, log on to the Multi-Media page at www.moderndrummer.com.

QUICK LOOKS

Evans G-Plus Tom Heads

by Rick Mattingly

Listen

For players who prefer the sound and feel of a single-ply batter head on their toms, but who need a head with more endurance than the typical single-ply, Evans has added the G-Plus tom batter to their line. It's essentially the same head as the Evans G1, but a bit thicker.

The heads are available in sizes from 6" to 20" in clear and coated models. We tested 12", 13", 14", and 16" coated heads and matched them with Evans EC Resonant Clear heads on the bottoms of all the drums.

As I was tuning the heads, I noticed a subtle difference in the tone and body these heads produced compared to those of an Evans G1. The sound of the G-Plus was darker with a bit more body and a little less ring. It would never be mistaken for a Hydraulic or Pinstripe, but was somewhere between a regular single-ply and a double-ply (such as the Evans G2).

I liked the sound of the G-Plus on all the drums, but my taste in drum and cymbal colors tends to be on the darker side of things. So I tried putting G1s on the 12" and 13" toms and G-Plusses on the 14" and 16" drums. Since both models are single-ply, the heads all sounded fine together. But the slightly thinner heads on the smaller drums had more brightness, while the slightly thicker heads on the larger drums gave them more body and depth. I suppose this approach could be compared to guitar players using thinner strings for the high notes and thicker ones for lower notes. So if you already love the way your smaller toms sound with G1s, but think your larger drums sound a bit thin in comparison, you might want to go with the G-Plus heads on them.

That's not to say that the G-Plus heads didn't work on the smaller drums. After checking out the G1/G-Plus combo, I put G-Plusses back on all the drums—which happen to be vintage "round badge" Gretsches—and that's where I plan to leave them. The G-Plus heads were a great match for those drums.

Although I'm not much of a head breaker, I did my best to abuse a couple of the G-Plus heads. And they stood up quite well to the thrashing I gave them. So if you like the general brightness of a single-ply head but need more endurance, these could be the answer.

THE NUMBERS

Evans G-Plus Tom Heads

6": $24 (clear), $25 (coated)
8": $25 (clear), $26 (coated)
10": $26 (clear), $27 (coated)
12": $27(clear), $28 (coated)
13": $28 (clear), $29 (coated)
14": $30 (clear), $31 (coated)
15": $32 (clear), $33 (coated)
16": $35 (clear), $36 (coated)
18": $40 (clear), $41 (coated)
20": $45 (clear), $46 (coated)

www.evansdrumheads.com

Audix

SCX-25A Condenser Microphone

by Mark Parsons

The SCX-25A at actual size

When we think of a so-called "drum mic," we usually think of something designed for one or two specific applications within the drumset. Maybe a large-diaphragm dynamic that's made to live inside a kick drum, or a small clip-on model intended for tom miking.

Overheads are a different story. Small condensers—with their fast transient response—generally do a great job of picking up cymbals. And ribbon mics are making a comeback with people looking for a warm, vintage sound. But when it comes to providing a good fundamental reproduction of an entire drumset, the design of choice is usually a large-diaphragm condenser.

Many of the better large condensers are designed to be vocal mics. As such, they frequently add color to their sound. This might work for specific applications, when the personality of the mic happens to fit the particular sound you're looking for. But this lack of universality can also be limiting.

Audix has taken a different approach with their large-diaphragm studio condenser, the SCX-25A. This mic was designed to excel at recording a wide variety of acoustic instruments. It's shaped like a lollipop, with the capsule placed on top of a small body that's reminiscent of a pencil-type condenser. The mic's capsule is suspended within the machined brass ring surrounding it, which gets rid of the need for a separate shock mount.

The SCX-25A is a cardioid-only model, with no amenities such as a high-pass filter or decibel-attenuating pad. This helps keep down the price without affecting the mic's fundamental sonic performance.

Initial Impressions

To get a quick "big picture" sense of where the SCX-25A is coming from, we started by placing it over a drumkit, alongside a few other large condensers. The other mics included a model from Germany and a model from Austria (both well-regarded solid-state condensers) as well as a tube-based model that's also lollipop-shaped. All of these comparison mics were more expensive than the SCX-25A, with prices ranging from a couple hundred dollars more than the Audix to almost twice its cost.

Out of the gate it was clear that the SCX-25A could hold its own (and then some) among its costlier competition. Mind you, none of the mics sounded bad—all of them would do a fine job as overhead mics. And all were roughly in the same ballpark, sonically speaking. But closer listening brought out the subtle differences between the models. And in each case, the advantage seemed to go to the Audix. Using the SCX-25A as a baseline, one of the other mics sounded a little harsh or "phasey" on top, one was somewhat darker with a small midrange boost, and one was a little over-hyped on both the top and bottom. My initial impression of the SCX-25A was that the sound was open, clear, and natural—hi-fi but not hyped.

Over The Head

Since large condensers are typically used as overheads for percussion applications, I tested the SCX-25As in various "overhead-ish" configurations. First up was the coincident pair (or "XY") technique. This yielded a very realistic sound. As usual with this technique, the resulting stereo image wasn't unrealistically wide (because the capsules are located as close to each other as possible).

When we spread the mics five feet apart and four feet above the kit, in a spaced pair ("AB") configuration, and had them looking straight down, we got a wider stereo spread without the "hole-in-the-middle" effect that you can sometimes get with this setup. This result is most likely due to the mics' fairly broad cardioid pickup pattern. The AB placement also gave us a great tom sound (warm and full, not thin and distant), even though they were placed several feet above the drums.

The SCX-25A can also handle EQ tweaks amazingly well.

For example, you could boost the highs to bring out more cymbals without the overall tone getting harsh. In a completely over-the-top move, I boosted 18 kHz by 15 dB, and the sound was still musical. Wow!

Next we went retro, with the isosceles or "Glynn Johns" technique. This mic configuration was used in a lot of classic recordings from the '60s and early '70s. It involves one mic placed several feet above the snare (looking down at the drum) and another mic placed the same distance from the snare but off to the side, typically above and behind the floor tom and pointed toward the snare. A third mic is positioned in front of the kick. When using the SCX-25As as the distant pair and an Audix D6 in front of the kick, this arrangement gave us a lively drum sound that could work very well with no additional close mics. Besides realistic cymbal sounds, this positioning also picked up a lot of great tom tone—even from a distance—and the snare was fat yet crisp. And since the Glynn Johns technique seems to love compression, we squashed the overheads and got that big, fat ambient sound that just kills in the right circumstances (think Bonzo).

Other Applications

Okay, we've learned that these mics excel as overheads. But why stop there—what else can they do? For starters, they make great room mics. But that's a no-brainer, given their overhead chops. What about as close mics? Well, we quickly learned that these mics don't have to be within drumstick damage range to get a great close-miked sound. At 12" above a 12" tom, they sounded like a high-quality mic positioned at a typical close-miking distance (2" to 4"). The tone was big, fat, and warm, with all the articulation you'd expect from a studio-quality condenser.

We had similar results on a snare. At 8" above the drum, there was a ton of that "you are there" factor. As we brought the mic closer to the drum, the sound thickened up a little (in a pleasing way) but never broke up under the extra sound pressure levels.

On hi-hats, the Audix reproduced a very nice sound that had sheen and sparkle, without getting harsh or spitty.

We also discovered a great-sounding, one-stop solution to conga miking—one SCX-25A positioned midway between the two drums, approximately 8" from either head. This gave us the same big, warm, present sound that the SCX-25A produced on toms.

The Lollipop Wrap-Up

If you do any amount of recording, then sooner or later you're going to want some serious studio-quality condenser mics. Sure, there's a place for those cool "vintage flavored" large condensers that can really add a certain character when desired. But for something that sounds universally great on pretty much any acoustic instrument, you'd have a hard time beating the SCX-25A, in both quality and value. The SCX-25A lists for $799. Matched pairs are available for $1,792.

Introduced This Summer!

Here are some of the most exciting pieces of gear that were on display at this year' s Summer NAMM tradeshow in Nashville, Tennessee.

1

2

3

4

1) PAISTE // 16"–20" **Signature Crystal Thin** crashes have a soft and glassy sound, which is ideal for low-volume gigs or symphonic setups ($414–$564). **paiste.com**

2) TAMA // This amazing limited edition **Starclassic Reserve** setup in Smoky Satin Walnut finish features bubinga shells with an outer ply of North American walnut (six-piece shell pack with a 20x22 kick, 8x10, 9x12, 12x14, and 14x16 toms, and a 6½x14 snare: $7,689.99). **3)** The super-deep 8x14 **Artwood Custom** snare (6-mm maple, $549.99) in Dark Desert Burst brings back the big '80s rock sound. **4)** The 7x13 Silver Shadow Sparkle **Artwood Custom** snare (6-mm maple, $499.99) combines fat tone with high-end crispness. **tama.com**

5) GRETSCH // The exotic **Renown Purewood Bubinga** six-piece shell-pack (18x22 kick, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a 6x14 snare) features 9-ply, 100% Bubinga shells with a clear gloss finish. Each drum has 30° bearing edges, die-cast hoops, and Silver Sealer interiors. **gretschdrums.com**

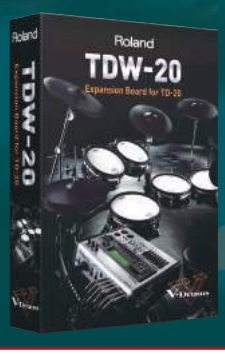
6) ALESIS/ION AUDO // The **Drum Rocker electronic drumset** is designed for use with the popular Rockband 2 video game, but can also be used as a stand-alone instrument with an external sound module ($299). **alesis.com, ionaudio.com**

7) WARWICK // The 16x18 **RockBag bass drum muffling pillow** comes with a built-in mic holder ($39.95). **warwick-distribution.de**

8) DIRECT SOUND HEADPHONES // HP-25 protective earphones provide 25 dB of noise reduction, which will help prevent hearing damage during high-volume practice and performance ($49.95). **extremeheadphones.com**

9) PRO-MARK // The **TDDC50W snare sticks** ($15.95) and **TS8 Sean Vega tenor sticks** ($17.95) are the first of several models designed in collaboration with award-winning Blue Devils drum corps. **promark.com**

10) MAPEX // This elaborate **Pro M setup** was created using the company's virtual kit-builder "My Pro M" Web program. **mapexdrums.com/my-pro-m/**



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11) LUDWIG // 100th anniversary **Centennial Series drums** (6-ply North American maple toms, 8-ply snare and kick) are designed for touring drummers and come in three basic shell packs—20", 22", or 24" kick, 12" and 16" toms, and a matching snare. **ludwig-drums.com**

12) ROLAND // The **TDW-20 expansion board** for the TD-20 percussion sound module features improved dynamics, new sounds, new ambience effects, and more ($599). **rolandus.com**

13) PEACE // A polished, corrosion-resistant 5 1/2x14 **titanium shell snare** ($1,600) has a dark and warm sound, while the 6 1/2x14 **carbon-composite snare** ($2,020) with a black, corrugated finish offers an explosive tone that covers the entire frequency spectrum. **peacedrum.com**

14) YAMAHA // The 11-ply **hybrid-shelled Phoenix kit** is made of plies of jatoba, kapur, maple, and burled ash, with the softer woods in the center. These drums feature redesigned Nouveau lugs and YESS mounts, and 30° bearing edge, with the edges of each kit piece being cut to a slightly different profile to best match the desired tone. **yamaha.com**

www.evansdrumheads.com

"When the music is this complex... the heads are clear." – Thomas Pridgen

The Mars Volta

PHOTO CREDIT: HADAS

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BUCKCHERRY'S XAVIER MURIEL

CARVING A DEEP GROOVE IN ROCK

The last time *MD* spoke with Xavier Muriel—for an online Web Exclusive interview in late 2006—Buckcherry was celebrating their brand-new line-up and huge "comeback" success story. The Los Angles rock band released their debut way back in 1999 and a second record, *Time Bomb*, in 2001, but disbanded shortly thereafter. Then, in 2005, the two founding members (and main-songwriters) Josh Todd and Keith Nelson put together a new band featuring guitarist Stevie Dacanay, bassist Jimmy Ashurst, and powerhouse drummer Xavier Muriel (replacing original drummer Devon Glenn).

After a four-year hiatus from recording—and rejections from just about every major record label—in 2006 the "new" Buckcherry released *15*, *before* signing a deal with Atlantic Records. The band then exploded on the charts with hit after hit. First was "Crazy Bitch," which was nominated for a Grammy for Best Hard Rock Performance. Then came chart-toppers "Next 2 You," "Everything," and the Top-10 smash "Sorry." The multi-platinum-selling CD has been on the charts for two years now and is *still* selling. That's not bad for Muriel, a motorcycle-building kid from Texas who always dreamed of becoming a rock star.

Growing up in a musical family, Xavier thought about being a professional rock drummer ever since he first saw KISS in concert as a young boy. Xavier spent years working with local bands and building Harley motorcycles to pay the rent, and eventually relocated to Los Angeles, where he was asked to join Buckcherry. The rest, as they say, is history.

Story by Billy Amendola
Photos by Sayre Berman

Not one to overplay, Xavier possesses technique that is hard, steady, and *grooving*. Of course, his goal is to play whatever is needed for "the song." But Muriel is focused like a laser beam on making sure the band's fans are bopping their heads and rocking out night after night.

Watching "X" play, some might actually be afraid of him, thinking he's the wild, out-of-control type. I don't want to spoil his image, but after getting to know Xavier, we can say he's one of the nicest, most respectful, and truly grateful persons you'll ever want to meet. Not much has been written about him, as most of the press seems to focus on the band and its "image." But that's fine with Xavier. A closer look at his abilities behind the kit reveals him to be a great rock drummer at the top of his craft.

MD spoke to Xavier as the band was wrapping up their new CD, *Black Butterfly*, and preparing to head out on the road with Mötley Crüe for this summer's Crüfest, which also features Papa Roach, Trapt, and Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx's side project Sixx: A.M. Read on, to learn how great ability, determination, and a positive spirit can lead to rock superstardom.

MD: Congrats on the new record. I know you've been busy on tour, but how are you?
Xavier: I'm good, thanks. Everything's been happening so ridiculously fast that it's been like a whirlwind, nonstop, day-to-day, with video shoots, photo sessions, and recording. But I have to admit, this is one of the most exciting things to happen to me. I've always wanted to be in Modern Drummer. I grew up reading it!
MD: The last time we spoke the band was just starting to break big-time with 15, and now look.
Xavier: Yeah! I guess every band or artist wants to create the best body of work possible and then put it out there in hopes that the masses can associate with it, take it in, and like it. And for this to happen to a band that had basically been written off by pretty much everyone in the industry is a great feeling.

We put a lot of hard work and heart into that last record, and we did everything on our own dime—and it's still selling. It's been a great ride. And now we're ready for round two. After touring a multi-platinum record for twenty-five months and doing four hundred shows, you come off of a tour like that, first of all, going, "Wow, how great is it to still be friends and dig each other as bros and musicians."

I remember every minute, pretty much, of what it took—all the times when you're tired, ill, lonely, sad, whatever—all the emotions a human runs through while doing this whole circus. I can now sit back and go, "Man, it was all worth it."
MD: Many kids don't realize how hard this business really is and all the work that goes into it.

XAVIER'S KIT

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Birch in custom embossed silver finish
A. $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 Mike Bordin signature snare
B. 10x14 rack tom
C. 16x16 floor tom
D. 16x18 floor tom
E. 18x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 19" APX Chinese
2. 19" AAX Stage crash (Inverted 8" bell on top)
3. 15" AAX hi-hats
4. 20" AAX Stage crash
5. 23" AAX Power ride
6. 20" AAX Power crash
7. 19" AAX Power crash (Inverted 10" bell on top)
8. 19" APX Chinese
9. 34" gong (not shown)

Hardware: Yamaha, including a Flying Dragon longboard pedal (with medium spring tension, Danmar long-shaft felt beater), custom-welded chain-link stands, custom "brass knuckle" cymbal wingnuts

Heads: Remo coated Emperor (or CS Black Dot) on snare batter, Ambassador snare-side (bottom very tight, top medium, Moon Gel for muffling), clear Emperors (or Suedes) on tom batters, with clear Diplomats on bottoms (medium pitch, no muffling), Powerstroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony logo head on front (batter loose, front tight, muffling on batter only)

Sticks: Vater Xtreme 5B model

Microphones: Audix, including D4 and D6 models, mounted using May Internal system

THE "X" FACTOR

BUCKCHERRY GUITARIST/PRODUCER KEITH NELSON ON XAVIER

Your band is only as good as your drummer. Play with a few bad ones, and you'll quickly learn the difference between a drummer who's along for the ride and someone who drives the music, or makes it swing—or both. The drums are the canvas on which all of the other colors are painted.

Every once in a great while you get lucky enough to play with a drummer who has the ability and the confidence to drive the whole machine. Xavier Muriel is one such musician, and we're a lucky bunch of guys to have him in the band.

"X" and I were friends long before we ever made music together. Upon coming into the Buckcherry camp, his enthusiasm, execution, and abilities were both obvious and infectious. There was no need to search for another drummer.

"X" always performs with grace under pressure, thinking on his throne but never *over*-thinking. Yeah, he's the consummate rock drummer—and one hell of a wrench on a vintage Harley!

"Great bands are made from great drummers. Working with Xavier in the studio was a real treat for me. When I left the studio after three days of tracking—and seventeen drum tracks later—I felt very confident that we had ourselves a hit record." — Marti Frederiksen, producer

Xavier: Exactly! When I was fourteen years old, this is all I dreamed of. But yes, it's a tremendous amount of hard work. I don't think anyone of us in the band takes anything for granted. We're five dudes who are lucky enough to play rock 'n' roll and make a living at it. When we went back to writing this new record, we were all of the mindset of, "Okay, nothing has changed for us—we're still in the same room—no new lavish rehearsal space." For the first record, the mindset was, we have nothing to lose so let's just go balls out. And for this new record, we're feeling that we really have something to prove because people think we're a one-shot hit.

We want to put out the best body of work for us so that if anything ever does, God forbid, go south, we can always look back and be excited and happy about it and not go, "Man, we shouldn't have done this, or we should have done that." We all have way too many years under our belts to have someone else drive the boat.

I think that's a really big thing that a lot of bands nowadays miss: They don't stay true to themselves, whatever that may be. If you're a speed metal band, be a speed medal band. If you are a Top-40 hit-making machine, be a hit-making machine. Don't let other people, record labels, or what's happening on the tube dictate what you are, because at some point in time that flavor is going to adjust itself to something else. And who knows, if you stay true to yourself, that flavor may be you.

I see so many bands that come up and are great, but then they wind up being manipulated and pushed in different directions and reformulated to sell whatever the product the company wants them to sell right then and there. Well, that's cool, but what about two years after that point?

MD: It's hard with bands. Any tips on staying together?

Xavier: We're an old-school gang. We're no different from all the majors back in the day—Zeppelin, Sabbath, The Stones—we have a very strong foundation of five guys who really trust each other and back each other up. There aren't a lot of bands out there that really look out for each other the way we do.

MD: That's what made The Beatles successful in their early days.

Xavier: The Beatles were definitely a gang. If one of them decided it was going to be a certain way and the other three agreed, look out, they were going in swinging. And nowadays, bands aren't like that. You'll have two guys who feel really heartfelt about the situation and you'll have another guy who is influenced by a label, and another guy who is influenced by his girlfriend, manager, or whatever. The next thing you know, it's over. In that respect, it's not a band anymore.

X MARKS THE SPOT

MURIEL ON THE MAKING OF BUCKCHERRY'S LATEST ALBUM, BLACK BUTTERFLY, TRACK-BY-TRACK

RESCUE ME—This was one of the first songs we wrote in pre-production. I keep it solid and simple until the middle section, where I do some fills. It really just needed to be put in a pocket and left there. Like a lot of the songs on this record, I've been using a crash-ride through the chorus to really open things up.

TIRED OF YOU—This is just a balls-out rocker with a tempo that makes you want to bang your head. There are a few times when I switch the beat around to give a different feel, and I think that adds a little something to the overall feel of the song.

TOO DRUNK—Nothing moves people more than 2 and 4, so this song is just tongue-n-cheek with a solid feel and no frills—just what it needs.

DREAMS—This is a mid-tempo tune that I really tried to lay on the backside of the beat—just enough to make it swing.

TALK TO ME—This song wasn't done until we went in to do drum tracks, so it was really fresh. Sometimes that's a great thing, as it keeps the track fresh and keeps me from over-thinking the parts. Using the floor tom during the verses really drives the song, and it also has cowbell, so you can't go wrong.

CHILD CALLED IT—This one came together really quickly and was inspired by a book that Josh read. It has kind of a punky feel. The chorus is a four-on-the-floor feel with a crash-ride to open it up.

PLEASE DON'T GO AWAY—This is the ballad of the record. I change up the kick pattern from a traditional feel to let the verses breathe, and I played the chorus with a little more "push."

FALLOUT—I just tried to think AC/DC on this one and rock out.

ROSE—This track was awesome to lay drums on. It reminds me of what I used to listen to, and it just made me feel good about being alive.

ALL OF ME—We layered so much on this song, trying to create a track with a lot of feel and warmth.

IMMINENT BAILOUT—This song was fun to track. It has a lot of energy and angst to it.

CREAM—We tried to make this song an epic, and it's a real departure from anything we've done. I'm very proud of it—as I am of all the songs. We tried to create a body of work that was totally different from our last record, and I'd like to thank our producers Keith Nelson and Marti Frederiksen for pulling the best out of me.

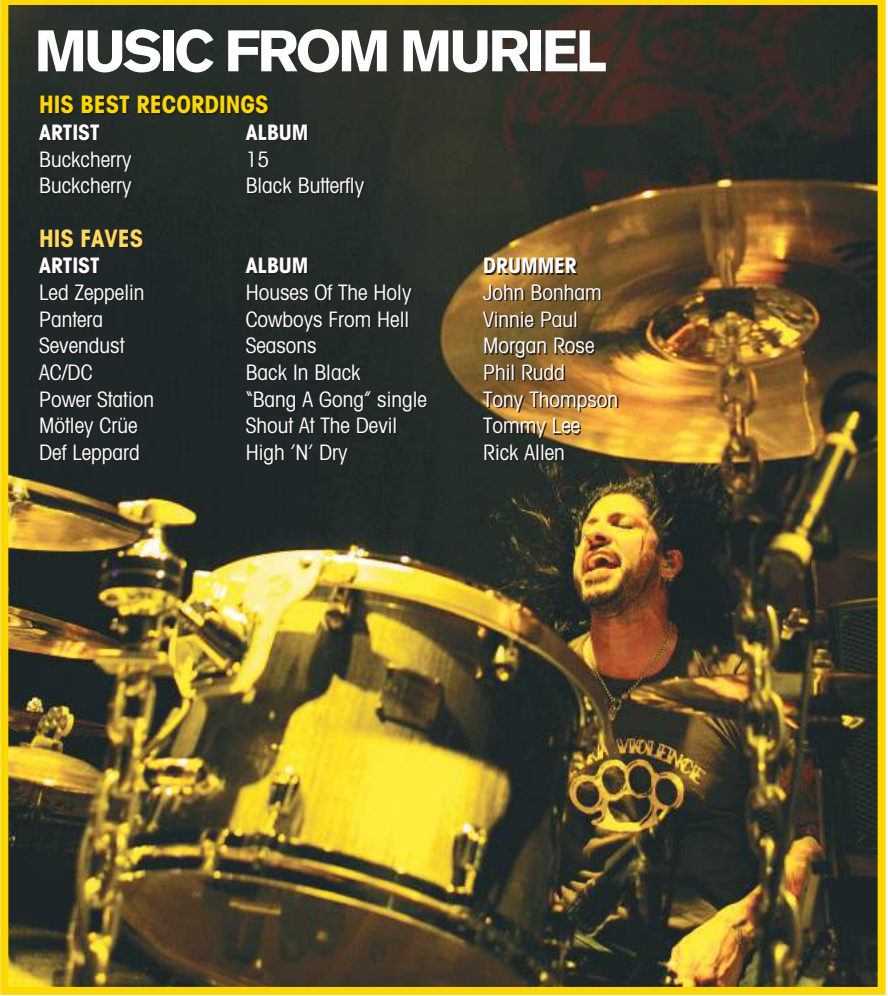
MUSIC FROM MURIEL

HIS BEST RECORDINGS

ARTIST	ALBUM
Buckcherry	15
Buckcherry	Black Butterfly

HIS FAVES

ARTIST	ALBUM	DRUMMER
Led Zeppelin	Houses Of The Holy	John Bonham
Pantera	Cowboys From Hell	Vinnie Paul
Sevendust	Seasons	Morgan Rose
AC/DC	Back In Black	Phil Rudd
Power Station	"Bang A Gong" single	Tony Thompson
Mötley Crüe	Shout At The Devil	Tommy Lee
Def Leppard	High 'N' Dry	Rick Allen



"If you're a speed metal band, be a speed metal band. If you are a Top-40 hit-making machine, be a hit-making machine. Don't let other people dictate what you are."

If you don't want to be in a band, go be a hired gun, be a studio musician. That way you don't have to worry about what being in a band really takes. It's a relationship. It's like being married to four other guys. We spend so much time together, and everything we do affects each other's lives.

MD: Good point. Let's talk a bit about the new CD.

Xavier: There are two or three tracks on the record that I think Buckcherry fans wouldn't expect to come out of us. But I think when they hear them, and really listen, they'll get it. And then when they see us live, they're going to go, "Oh, okay, I get it." That's what we're hoping for.

There are some people who will hear the record, expecting another "Crazy Bitch." I think the people that have grown with us are going to say, "Okay, I understand. I get it and I love it." And that's the most important thing.

MD: How was it working with your co-producer, Marti Frederiksen? I heard he's a pretty good drummer himself.

Xavier: Marti is incredible to work with! First of all, he's a stand-up dude and a really nice guy. You always hear horror stories about producers who were musicians, and they want you to play like this or that. But Marti's not like that at all. He respects everyone first and foremost as a human being and then as an artist. He pulls the best out of you, and he wants the best possible track he can get that's going to represent you for the rest of your life. Once that track is done and it's sleeved, you can't go back and change it.

Marti's always thinking about the song. Maybe that little fill doesn't quite work there because it doesn't help push the chorus. He's very interactive with the band in a positive manner. He was never obtrusive, and he never tried to push his sound or try to make it sound the way he would play it. That's not what he's about.

Marti has worked with some of the greatest drummers in the industry—like Joey Kramer—he'll be like, "Okay, check this out." He doesn't sit behind the kit and play, he just stands in front of you and goes, "Hey, man, how about this?" And when another drummer "mouths" a part to you, we get it. When a guitar player says, "Go boom, batch a-boom," it doesn't work. The only people that can talk to drummers are drummers—I don't know why that is, but it's true.

Marti was a key part of just letting me do my thing. On the first record I was really concerned with timekeeping and pocket. So I approached that record from more of a Phil Rudd–type perspective. I put it in the pocket and left it there, and only once in a while I'd kind of do my thing. But on this new record, Marti was like, "I want you to really cut loose on this part. Don't worry about anything, just play whatever comes from your heart." And I was like, "Awesome," because for the longest time I never really got to do that, if only because of the fact that I was really concerned with just being a great timekeeper.

I never considered myself a virtuoso drummer. And I never wanted to be. I just wanted to be a solid rock drummer in a great rock band. There are plenty of other cats out there who are ridiculously incredible; I'll leave that to them.

MD: It's a whole different technique and approach.

Xavier: Yes, and for what I do, my job is to make people groove, dance, and have a good time. And as long as you're cool with your job, that's all that matters. And Marti was really great. He would say, "Think about that part for a second and then just do whatever comes to mind. Just whip me out something you would never think to do." So we'd start the track, I'd get to that part, and in my head I'm already thinking of the chop that I want to do, and I would go for it. We'd be done and Marti would say, "That's what I needed." And Marti was also cool because, being a drummer himself, he would be so into it that he would say, "Do you really like the snare tone on that song?" And I'd be like,

XAVIER MURIEL

" You know what, I' m not digging it. It' s too pingy. Maybe we need a little more warmth, a bit more roundness, and not so much crack." And he' d be like, " You' re totally right. Let' s try this snare." So it was a really fun process. I was allotted five days to complete fifteen tracks, and I wound up doing them in three and a half, just because I was so excited to play these songs.

MD: Did you know them from pre-production?

Xavier: Most of them, yes. When we recorded 15, I knew those songs top to bottom, side to side, with no problem. I could play them by myself, because we were so well rehearsed. And since we didn' t have any budget, I had two days to cut thirteen tracks. On this one, the last week of pre-production Marti came into the room with us and said, " Maybe we need to do some work on a few more tracks." So five of the songs we learned right then and there, and then tracked them. So it was kind of scary for me because I wasn' t as well prepared as I was for 15. But on the other side of the coin, it was great because it kept that freshness since I hadn' t over-thought the process. I didn' t think; I just played. And it was awesome.

MD: Did you track with a click?

Xavier: Yes. The band recorded basic tracks live, and I was the only one with the click.

MD: Any triggers or loops?

Xavier: There are no triggers, its all acoustics and all live. I never use triggers in the studio, and I don' t use them live. I think the whole triggering thing is non-organic. That' s not how Zeppelin did it..or AC/DC..or Aerosmith—listen to " Draw The Line," and you' ll hear little nuances. You might be like, " Wow, that wasn' t as tight as it could have been," but that' s the cool thing about that track. When you start getting into this whole thing about making everything perfect via computers, you lose all the feeling. If that' s what you want, just get a drum machine and be done with it.

I know of so many albums that will be released this year that are completely done with electronic kits and plug-ins. That' s not for me. As a matter of fact, I used the same kit on all of the pre-production for the record and the recording of the record. I' m touring with the same kit, too. It' s my Yamaha custom-made birch kit.

MD: Where did you record?

Xavier: At Dave Grohl' s studio.

MD: So the room must be great for drums.

Xavier: Oh, yeah! The room is incredible, and every record that' s come out of that studio just sounds ridiculous. The room is monstrous and literally constructed for drummers. To be able to go there and do my tracks at Grohl' s place was just phenomenal. And he' s a really great guy.

MD: Was this the first time you met him?

Xavier: Yes, officially. He came down one day and hung out with us. He looked through the control room window and said, " Is that your

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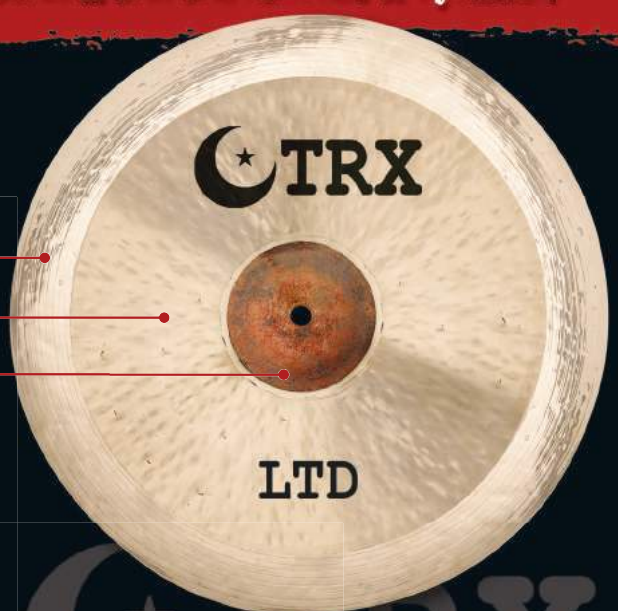

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Xavier Muriel
Buckcherry

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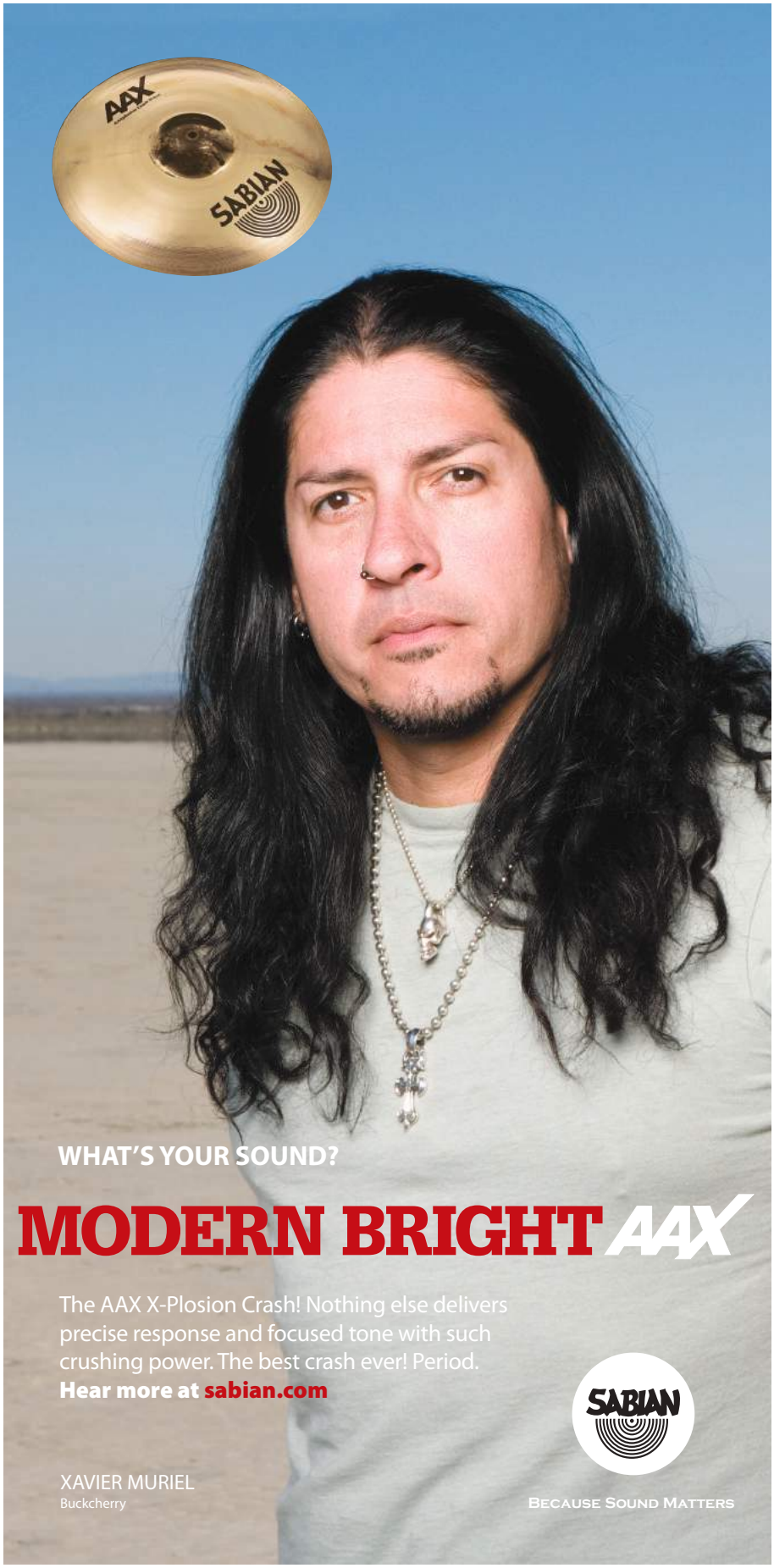


XAVIER MURIEL

kit or a rental?" I said, "No, that's my kit." And he goes, "Can I?" And he walked out there and looked at it and said, "What kind of kick drum is that?" So he sat down and started slamming the kit. I grabbed my video camera and was like, "This is Dave Grohl playing my drumset!"

So he played for a few minutes and was like, "Dude, that's an amazing kick drum. You have to lean into that, don't you?" I said, "Yep, every night." So the guys in the band—Keith, Stevie, and Jimmy—stepped into the room and they started jamming with Dave, doing a little kind of impromptu blues jam. And Dave's a pretty heavy hitter. I jumped back into the control room and was listening to it, going, "Oh my god, this is so rad!" He was a really cool cat to hang out with.

MD: It's nice to hear that you still get excited. A lot of people in this business lose that after a while and become jaded.

Xavier: I think what happens with bands, or drummers, is that if they take the quickest and easiest path to getting something done, they end up losing the love that they originally had for it. When I was growing up and wanting to do this, there were certain people who inspired me that, now that I've gotten to meet some of them, have turned out to be not very nice people. That really affected me. I kind of felt like I was that fifteen-year-old kid again who just got punched in the gut by his idol. But then, when I meet guys like Grohl, who are so ridiculously down to earth and cool, I go, that's where I want to stay. Besides, I spent so long trying to get here that I'll never take advantage of anything and I'll never take anything for granted.

Honestly, I still get giddy about all of this. Recently I went to see Morgan Rose with Sevendust, and I was singing along to those songs, remembering when I was back in Austin building Harleys at my shop and hearing their tunes. I was also a huge KISS fan growing up. I can remember meeting Eric Carr when I was thirteen and going home and telling my mother how cool he was.

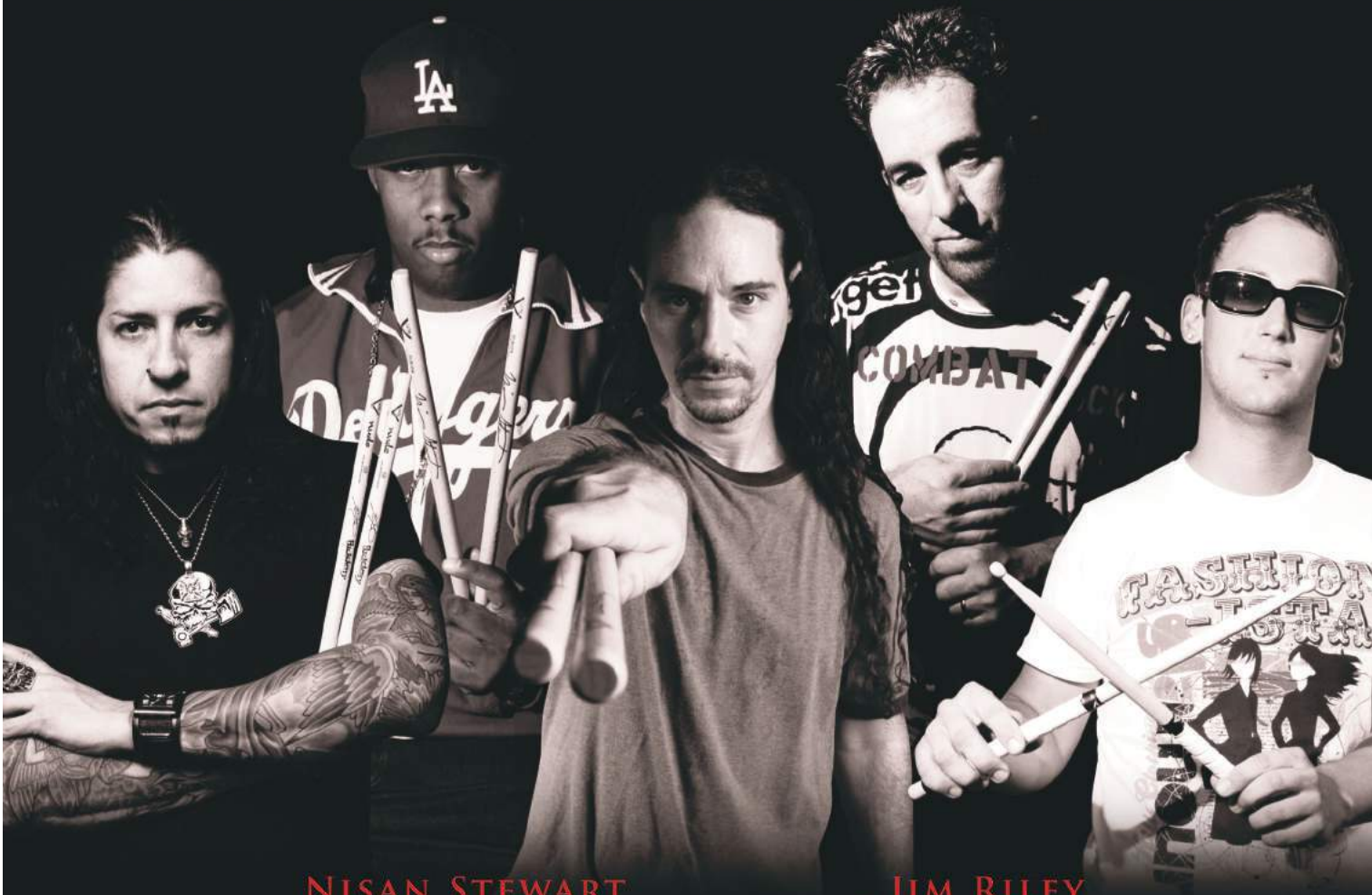
MD: How did you get into music?

Xavier: My parents we're really into music. But my brother, who's eight years older than me, was the one responsible for all of the rock that I listened to growing up. And I was really into disco music. [laughs]

MD: You were into disco?

Xavier: I was into a lot of crazy stuff. [laughs] I grew up in a Latin household. We listened to Etta James, Tito Puente, The Gipsy Kings, and also Judas Priest, Kansas, Zep, Sabbath, and Mötley. I also remember being eleven years old and listening to disco—KC & The Sunshine Band, The Jackson 5, and your old band [MD editor/writer Billy Amendola played in '70s hit

YOU SEE THEM ON THE CHARTS
YOU SEE THEM AT THE SHOWS
YOU SEE THEM WITH VATER



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disco/R&B band Mantus], which they would play at the skating rink, because I loved roller-skating. Say what you will about disco, it had some steady drumming, and whether you liked it or not, it made you dance. My mom would come in and take my brother's Led Zeppelin record off the turntable and put Mantus on, and we would dance in the kitchen while she was making dinner.

I was also into Chic and Tony Thompson, God rest his soul. What an incredible drummer. I was just listening to him the other day. I loved the Madonna record he did, and David Bowie's "Let's Dance." I totally got off on all that stuff when I was a kid.

When I practice, I don't do it to rock 'n' roll. I'll put on old Prince, Kool & The Gang, or Michael Jackson records. I think a lot of people forget how incredibly grooving those records were back in the day, and how influential the drumming was.

MD: Let's talk more about your parents' influence. You mentioned that your mom played a bit and that your dad sang.

Xavier: My mom was actually a corps line snare drummer in her high school band. My father was a singer in what's called a "conjunto," which is a Spanish band. And my brother played trombone in the high school band, and he played guitar as well.

At the time I went to see Eric Carr with KISS, I was kind of playing guitar. But I wasn't really good at it and didn't really like it. So when I told my mom about my interest in the drums, she pulled out her old Ludwig case that she had from high school. And there it was—a snare drum. She would sit with me after school and we would play. She played traditional grip, and that's how I started. I just messed around with it, but eventually she asked me, "Would you like to take lessons?" This was when we were living in Beaumont, Texas, which is outside of Houston. So I think I took two lessons, and that was how I got started. Things just kind of fell into place from there.

My mom would come to see my shows, and instead of just coming up and saying, "You were so great," she'd come up and be like, "You know, the timing on that one song was a little off." [laughs] Or she would say, "I don't know what kind of single-stroke roll you were trying to do in that part, but it was wrong." In all honesty, my mom was more brutal when I was younger than any producer I've ever worked with. [laughs] But she always did it in the most loving way.

MD: I understand that for a time you taught drumming.

Xavier: Yes. When I started teaching, I'd see these kids who were like, "I want to play as fast as Travis Barker." "Well, you know, Travis Barker learned how to play rudiments before he actually learned how to play the drumset. So why don't we work on that?" I guess that was my mom's influence right there.

I have incredible parents who always believed in me and always said, "You can do anything you want in life." My father was always of the mindset that you can do anything you put your mind to. Of course, the backside of that is you have to be willing to sacrifice whatever it takes to get there.

For more on Xavier and Buckcherry, visit www.buckcherry.com. For more with Xavier, check out his MD Caught In The Web interview, archived at www.moderndrummer.com.

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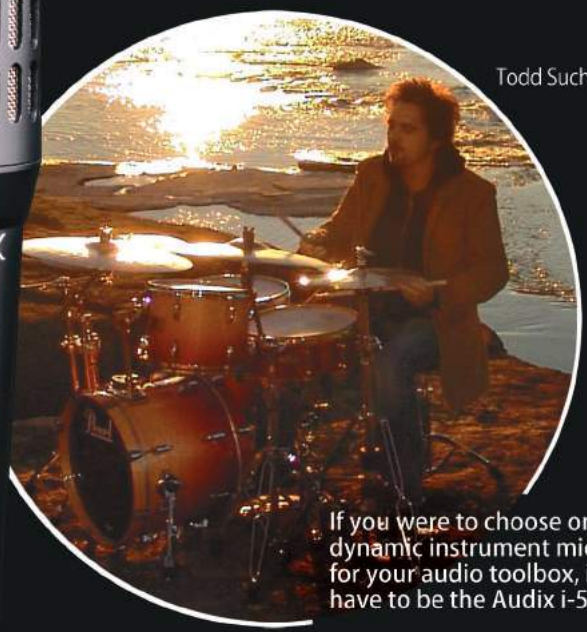

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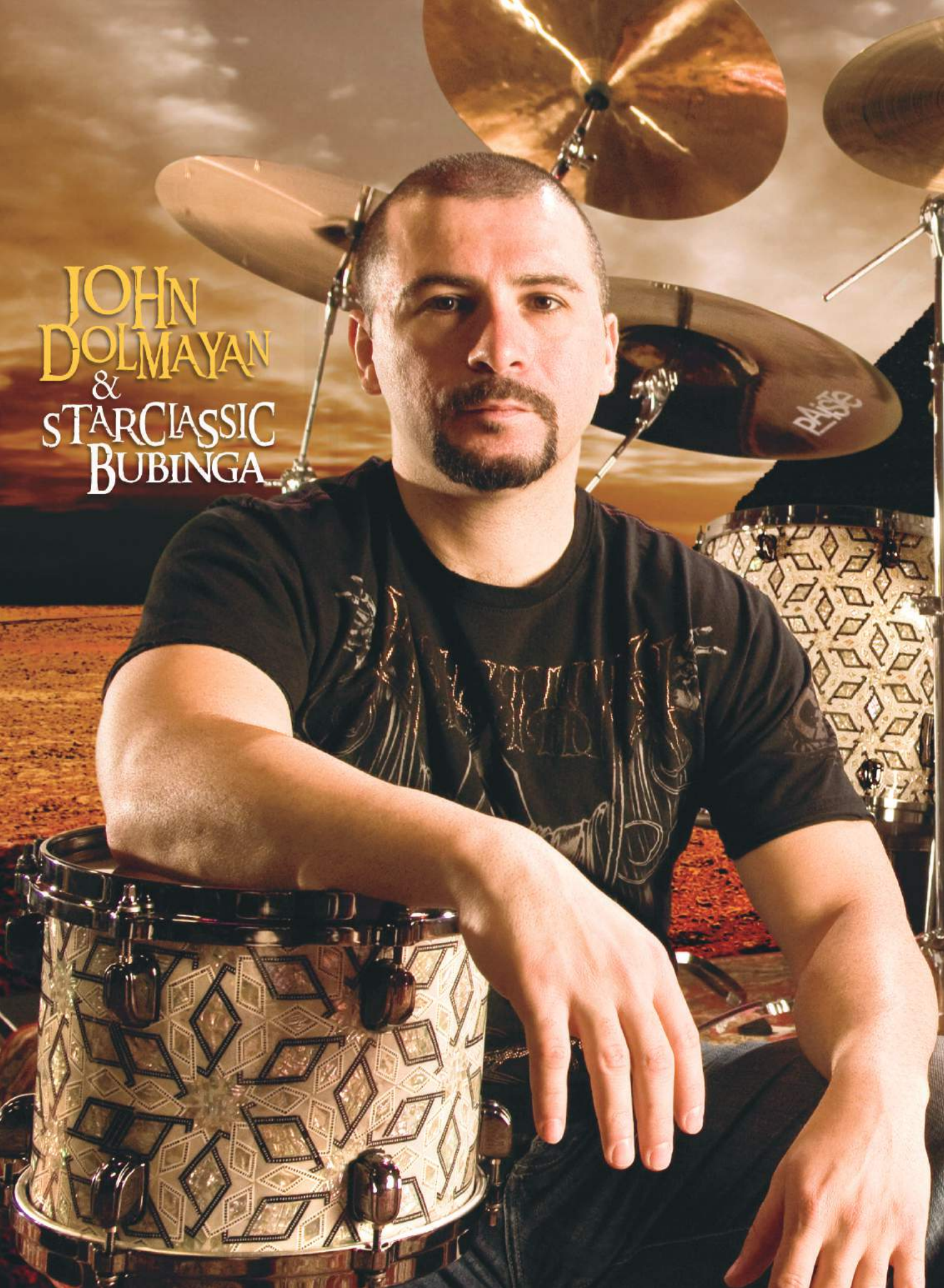
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R&B Great

BRIAN FRASIER-MOORE

Born To Play

Aaliyah, Ginuwine, Ciara, Janet Jackson, Patti LaBelle, Babyface, Justin Timberlake, Backstreet Boys, Christina Aguilera, Usher, and now Madonna—no doubt about it, Brian Frasier-Moore has carved out an amazing career.

But it's no surprise that the R&B great is in such demand. One listen to his exciting style and deep-soul groove—one that can rock stadiums, and regularly does—and you *know* why. Brian Frasier-Moore has a special gift.

Amazingly, Brian's background almost defies the groove-oriented superstar gigs he's so closely associated with. He was only five when he first began playing drums in the Philadelphia Pentecostal church where his dad was the pastor. Brian was chosen by default—no one else could play. So there he was, playing for the choir and every other church event imaginable. And growing up in a Christian household, there was little secular music played, so drumming influences were few and far between.

When pressed on the subject, Brian does recall John Patitucci's *On The Corner*, a record that the drummer says was a life-changer, in that it introduced him when he was a teenager to the playing of his all-time favorite drummer, Vinnie Colaiuta. According to Brian, "After that, I got around to seeing what this whole drum world is all about."

With absolutely no formal training, Frasier-Moore is the answer to that often asked question, "Are you born with it or is it developed?" In this case, the answer is definitely "born." Naturally, development followed—his church experience, all the time he spent listening to music, and, of course, all of the touring that he eventually did. Still, it's impossible to avoid the conclusion that Brian Frasier-Moore is one of those rare talents who was simply *meant* to play the drums.

MD: Playing in church, how would you say you learned the concept of grooving?

Brian: A lot of people have different opinions about church drumming. Yes, we overplay in church, quite a bit. We overplay to the tenth power! [laughs] But we do learn how to groove.

We also learn how to play over the barlines without even knowing we're doing it. We learn how to express ourselves in 6/8 when it's a 4/4 groove. I would say that growing up in church teaches you how to play the groove, but especially how to play fusion. You really get to express yourself—in fact, that's required. If you don't express yourself, you get kicked off the drums.

In the church, I grew up playing all over the song, from top to bottom, just showing all of my chops. By the end of a song I'd have played everything I knew. They thrive on that approach in that environment. It's normal. If you were to go in there and lay down a regular groove, they'd be like, "What is that?"

MD: But if you took that approach into a recording studio, you'd get fired.

Brian: I've seen a lot of guys come from the church scene and struggle in the pro music world.

MD: How did you figure things out when you came out of that environment?

Brian: When I first came out, I thought it was all about me. That's about as honest as I can get. I thought, "I've got some chops, the world is seeing me now, I love it, I love it." But that changed as soon as that next-level gig came around and musical directors said, "Okay, calm down and learn the music. We still want that kind of fire, but we don't want you all over the place. Learn the music."

I had to learn how to channel my energy in different ways. Now I don't have to play a whole lot on a verse. I'll just concentrate on making my groove so tight that you feel, Wow, that simple verse part feels amazing.

MD: Once you were out of your teens, what happened from there?

Brian: When I turned eighteen, I went to college for two years and was an editor on a city paper called The Legal Intelligencer. But at the same time, I was doing gigs with Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince on the weekend and other Philly acts like Soulchild and Jill Scott. I still played with the church choir and played on the weekends. I did that for two years.

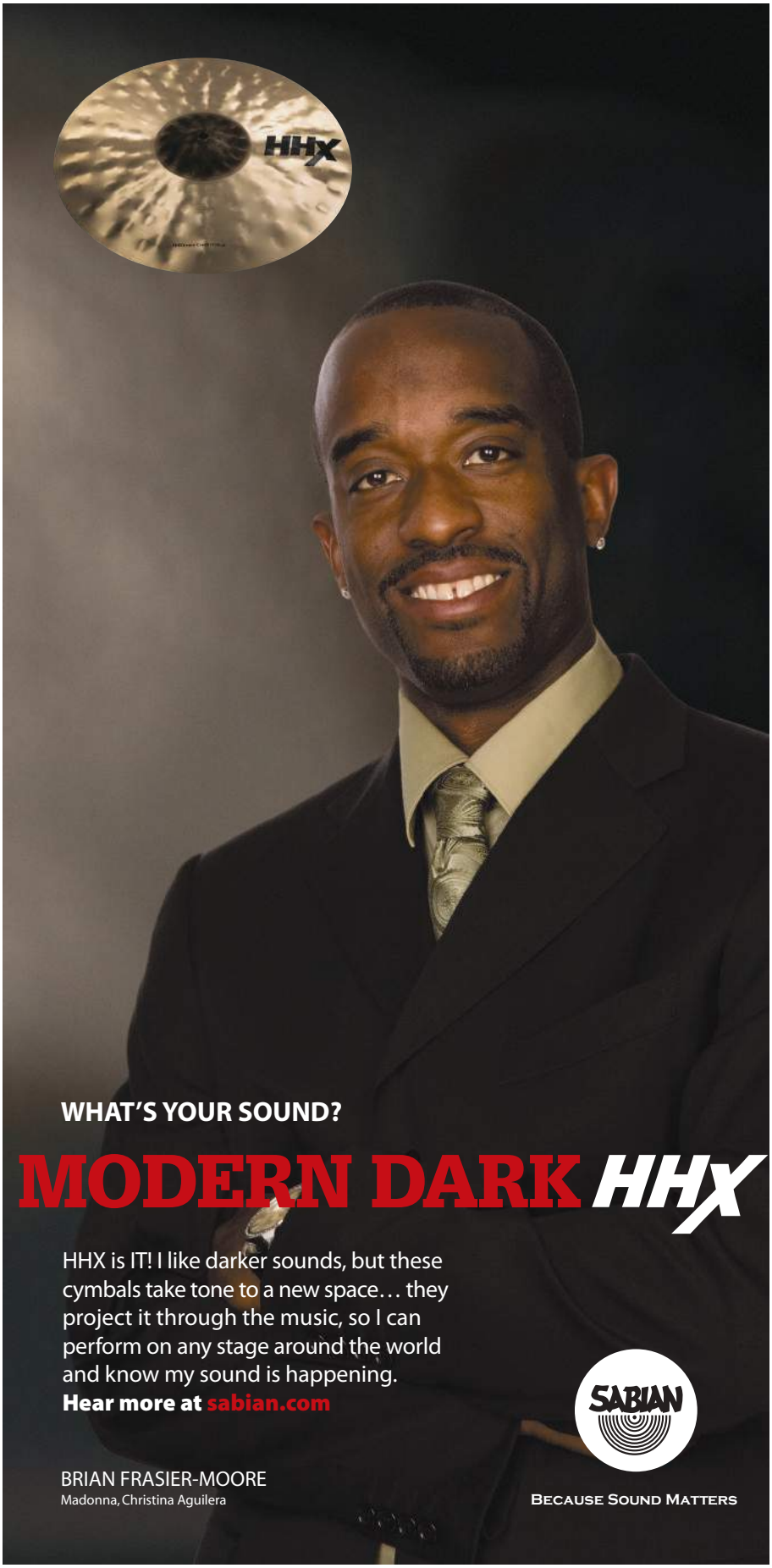
When my first tour came, I quit my job. The tour was with the Whitehead Brothers, whose father was from McFadden & Whitehead, who'd had the hit "Ain't No Stopping Us Now." That was 1996.

MD: How did your parents feel about you playing in the secular world?

Brian: That was tough. My father was a pastor. The names I was working with weren't really big enough for my parents to be proud of yet, so I went

"I am not much impressed by drummers these days; I always end up preferring drum loops to live drummers. But when Brian plays, you pay attention."—Madonna

Rahav



BRIAN FRASIER-MOORE

through quite a bit trying to pursue my career. They weren't very happy that I left school after two years.

I'll never forget being in London with The Whitehead Brothers on my first tour, opening for Blackstreet, and seeing Gerald Heyward on drums. At our first show, I thought I played great. We got off the stage, and I was so hyped up that nobody could tell me anything—I was the man! [laughs] Then Blackstreet came on, and right then I realized what it took to play a serious show. It was amazing. My mouth dropped to the floor. Gerald Heyward was one of the first guys I saw play who really inspired me to push myself to the next level.

MD: Can you talk about the difference between those two levels?

Brian: I did a lot of thinking about this and talked to several people, and I think I figured it out. For instance, I talked to Ricky Lawson, another one of the greats I admire. I talked to many top pros about this, and what they told me is it's about becoming what you're playing. It's about becoming each and every song you're playing, and that means exactly reproducing the groove, the feel, the tempo, the attitude, the sound…. I mean, seriously, for instance, if Madonna has a song that has a high-pitched snare, then I'm going to look at all of my acoustic snares and say, "Which one matches that snare sound the best?" Or am I going to sample that sound and trigger it?

It's about attention to detail—every detail. I'm going to listen to the hi-hat pattern on the recording, and then I'm going to listen to the bass lines, and then I'm going to listen to where the chord changes come in, and then I'm going to listen to the lead vocals, the background vocals, the dynamics, the shape of the tune, everything. It's that attention to detail that takes you to the next level.

MD: What do you consider your big break?

Brian: After The Whitehead Brothers, the big break for me was when I had the chance to work with Aaliyah and Ginuwine. I went on tour with them at the same time; the management company was a little cheap so they hired one band for both artists.

The musical director on that gig, Johnny Crumb, was also a drummer, although he was the keyboard player on that gig. He told me, "Every time I point to you, I want you to play everything you know." I said, "Are you serious? That's really different for a musical director to say to a drummer." Long story short, we played the Keenan Ivory Wayans Show, one of my first big TV shows. I was so nervous, and, at the time, Timbaland produced Aaliyah and

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Ginuwine, and I was the first drummer to reproduce his beats live. That gig went well, and, in fact, the TV show got me so much exposure. Everyone was calling, saying, "I want your energy. I love the way you play."

MD: Who was calling?

Brian: Ultimately, Usher, which opened a huge door. He gave me an eight-bar solo on one of his biggest singles on a DVD, which ended up being released as a CD. People still call me today to tell me things like they're going to Berklee School of Music and they're preparing to play my solo from the live Usher DVD for their school presentation.

MD: What was it?

Brian: It was a section where the dancers did a freestyle part on "You Make Me Wanna." One day in rehearsal they were working on it, and it was just a beat playing. I started messing around with it. Usher said, "That's what I want you to do. I just want you to freak that part right there."

MD: The person you've been with the longest is Christina Aguilera.

Brian: I've worked with her for eight years, since her first record, "What A Girl Wants." I've done three tours with her. Besides the music, we're like brother and sister.

MD: How does she feel about your going off with Madonna?

Brian: Oooohhhh, she can't stand it. She's so jealous. When I played with The Backstreet Boys during time off from Christina, she was about to start rehearsals, but I still had another week to go, so she pushed back the rehearsals! She called up and said, "I can't believe you're making me push back my rehearsals!" Even when I was working with Janet Jackson, she waited. Christina was trying to start the Stripped tour.

MD: How did your relationship with Christina begin?

Brian: Christina was a wing and a prayer. I was in Philadelphia, and Lil' John [Roberts] called and said he could hook me up with the audition, which was in Los Angeles. I flew out with a stick bag full of sticks. At the audition, producer Ron Fair was right in front of my face, and there were fifteen other drummers there. I understood the music; it took me back to church, where we played syncopated rhythms all the time, 32nds, sometimes 64th notes—that was just normal to me.

The song I had to audition on was "What A Girl Wants," and I understood it. After I played, they asked if I could stay over another day, so I had to find someone to stay with overnight. I came back the next day and they hired me. It was really a go-getter situation because I really thought I was the underdog, not being from Los Angeles and all. Rehearsals were in less than a week, so I went back home to Philly. The next time I came out to LA, I didn't have to pay for it.

MD: What were the rehearsals like?

Brian: They were a little different for me because it was my first pop gig. It was very organized and structured. You know how some musicians, if you're not doing anything and the band is sitting there, and the programmer is trying to get something straight, the musicians are fiddling with their instruments, just miscellaneous playing? There was none of that! That's where I learned how to consider myself an "entity."

You have to think of yourself as a business. People look at not just how well you play, but how well you carry yourself, the aura and vibe you give off, how you look, how you speak, and how you present yourself. It's the whole thing.

MD: And what about the difference between playing pop and R&B music?

Brian: The difference between pop and R&B

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is that R&B is a little more led by emotions. If one day you're feeling good and the artist comes up and says, "Just do it," meaning just go for something new, even if you've never rehearsed it, no problem. In the pop world, you have to copy the record exactly and then maybe put your energy into the performance. It's a fine line—you can add feeling, but without adding notes.

With Christina, there are dancers, pyro, video, and many other structured elements to the performance, so if I want to add something, I need to add it within what the dancers are doing, what the pyro is doing, what the vocals are doing, and so on. It's all about the parts. That's not to say you can't add anything, but if you do, you have to be smart about it.

A driver's seat view of one of Brian's tour kits

MD: How did you get hip to the triggering and electronics that are so essential to the artists of today?

Brian: When I first started with Christina, I hooked up with my tech, Chris Achzet, who I've been working with ever since. He showed me the ropes through all of the endorsements and helped me make myself a business. He also helped me with the whole triggering method.

MD: What happened after Christina?

Brian: I started doing musical director work and putting bands together. It wasn't for huge artists, but R&B artists. In Philadelphia, we have a lot of well-known producers, and I grew up with several of them in church. So when they didn't like the way their bands were interpreting their music, they'd call me. "Brian, we don't like the way Jill Scott's band is sounding, so put a band together for her," or "We don't like the way Glenn Lewis is sounding, so put a band together." That opened a lot of other doors for me, programming people's shows and giving the artists tips on what they should do: "You should come out on this part, you should not be here, we should put this here…." That opened up my whole understanding for making a show a show. It was fun.

MD: Were you on hiatus with Christina?

Brian: It worked out that every time I'd come back from Christina, I would pick up another job as either a musical director or another step higher. I'm very thankful for that. I don't take it for granted.

MD: How did the gig with Madonna come about?

Brian: After Christina's Stripped tour, she was planning to go back out and do a big band show, which sounded amazing, and I was looking forward to playing it. It was going to be Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, big

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band swing, live vocals, horns—it was crazy. But she cancelled it. I was disappointed. But then the musical director for Justin Timberlake at the time, Kevin Antunes, called me to see if I would be able to do Justin. So I did a tour overseas with Justin, and it was great.

When it was time for Justin to go out again on his last tour, they called from the studio saying, "We can't wait to hear you on this song…." But I had bad news for them. Christina was going on the Back To Basics tour. My loyalties were to her—I'd been with her for a very long time.

Anyway, getting back to how I got the gig with Madonna, when Justin was working with her on the single "4 Minutes," I was out on the road with Babyface. I got a phone call from Kevin, asking if I wanted to do Madonna's tour. I was going, "Man, don't play with me! Don't call my phone saying these things! Sure, I'd love to play with Madonna. What do I need to do?" Apparently Justin had been going on and on about me in the studio to Madonna, and that's how I got considered for her gig.

MD: When did you start working with her?

Brian: This past April 14. I flew to New York to start my first rehearsals with her.

MD: What was it like the first day you walked in?

Brian: Ah, man. Even before the first day, she had some questions for me: "How do you feel about playing with a click track?" I said, "Come on, that's what I do." She asked, "How do you feel about playing with electronics?" "That's what I do, no problem." She also didn't know what color drums she wanted to use for the promo tour. I have about eight sets in Los Angeles, and I told the production manager I didn't know which one to send to New York. He said, "Just bring all of them." All of my drumsets are now in New York, just in case.

It was pretty intimidating walking into my first day of rehearsal, because you realize that the sky is the limit with these people. But the rehearsals were great. I met everybody. Madonna wasn't there at first, but everybody in the crew and band was fantastic.

Then there was the first day Madonna came in. Oh man, I was so nervous. She walked in and everybody was like, "Ah." Nobody was saying much at first. Then it turns out that she likes to joke around a lot and she likes to start rehearsals with, "Somebody tell me a joke." So I was on the Internet Googling jokes. Silly stuff.

BRIAN FRASIER-MOORE

Madonna carries so much presence and power with her. After two days of being stiff because I was so nervous, her husband came back and said, " You' ve got to loosen up. I know you' re just meeting Madonna for the first time, but you' ve got to loosen up." Sometimes it' s not about your playing. It' s about your personality and how you are with people, how cordial and open you are so they feel comfortable.

MD: What do you think she needs from a drummer?

Brian: Consistency. On her last two tours, her previous drummer didn' t even use acoustic drums. It was all electronics. On this tour, she needs someone who has consistency. I' m playing all the triggered sounds, too, on my acoustic drums, so I have to be consistent like the record. It can' t be all over the place. I think she also wants to feed off of her drummer, feel her drummer, and know her drummer has her back and has endurance so she can do her thing.

MD: What goes into preparing for a gig like this? What are some of the challenges you have to work through?

Brian: There are three main challenges to think about: personality—you come in and learn the people. There are new people and you learn what' s funny to people and you learn their personalities. That' s always a big challenge.

Then you learn the music—how a superstar hears her music. She' s heard these tracks so many times, and she' s been singing these songs all her life, so you have to dissect the music and be in the music.

The other challenge is your gear, because Madonna will change a color at the last

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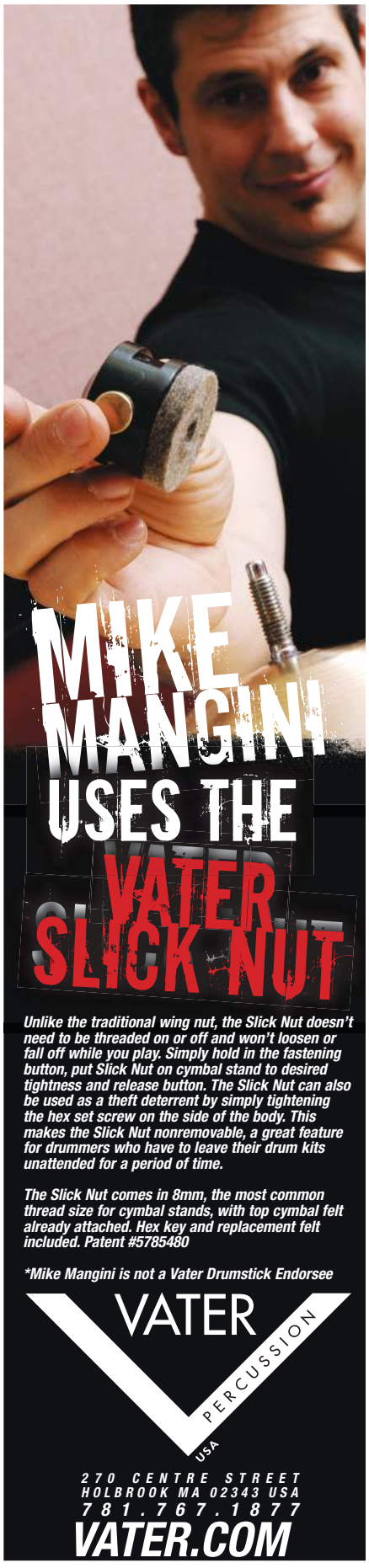
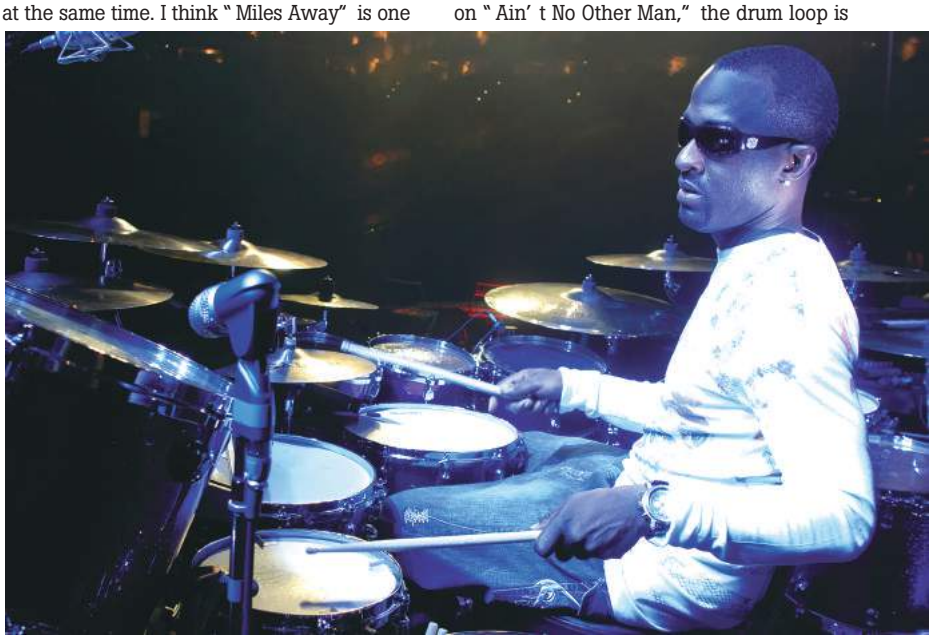


BRIAN FRASIER-MOORE

minute, which is my headache at this very moment. It takes six weeks to get my custom drums made from the date I give them the color, but she won't know the color until a little too late to get them on time, so I have to prepare for that. Basically it's about being able to adapt to all the expectations and challenges. When she says, "I want electronic kick on this song," well, I don't even own electric kick pads. So you get on the phone, "Listen, I'm playing with Madonna, let me check out your stuff…." You have to make sure it's all there. It can be stressful. Thank goodness I have the relationships I have with my companies.

MD: What's your favorite stuff to play with her?

Brian: Every song is a challenge and a reward at the same time. I think "Miles Away" is one of my favorite songs, as well as "Candy Shop." I love the various moods she hits. "Miles Away" is a song about being far away from the person you love. I have a lady, and sometimes I feel that song so much. The groove is so dope, and I get into it so much that I feel like I'm the one singing the song. I try to put that vibe into the whole show.



MD: Obviously one of the challenges to this type of gig is performing live to a click. Can you offer any tips for doing that?

Brian: Working with a click solely depends on the person who programmed the show. Sometimes you have programmers who put the background vocals or the drum samples directly on the click. But sometimes you have people who are a little lazy and put the vocals behind the click and the drum loops slightly ahead of the click. At that point, you have to decide where you're going to be. It gets tricky.

I use the click as a guide. If I play directly to it and the vocals are slightly behind, then it sounds like I'm rushing. On Christina, DJ Premier did most of the songs. He's a DJ, so he freestyled the beats, like on "Ain't No Other Man"—no click, just a loop, so there's no way that that drum loop is going to line up with the click; it's impossible. But in that setting you have to lock to the drum loop, not the click.

I suggest that drummers practice with a metronome so they can have a sense of that perfect time. But when you get on the gig and there's a click, drum loops, vocals, explosions, and whatever else is on that track, you have to be detailed and go through each song to know where everything lies. For instance, on "Ain't No Other Man," the drum loop is behind on the verses, ahead on the hooks, and a little faster on the bridge….It's a lot to keep in mind, but you have to be that detailed on these types of gigs.

MD: You've accomplished so much in your career and have played with so many greats. Really, where do go after performing with someone like Madonna? Do you still have goals?

Brian: There's one gig I would really like to do before it's all over—Sting. Vinnie Colaiuta is my favorite drummer, and when he was with Sting and did his record Ten Summoner's Tales—oh my God, that record is crazy! That's a gig I have to do. I'd like to see how my playing style would match up with Sting. I'd also love to work with Paul McCartney and Eric Clapton. Yeah, there are always more goals.

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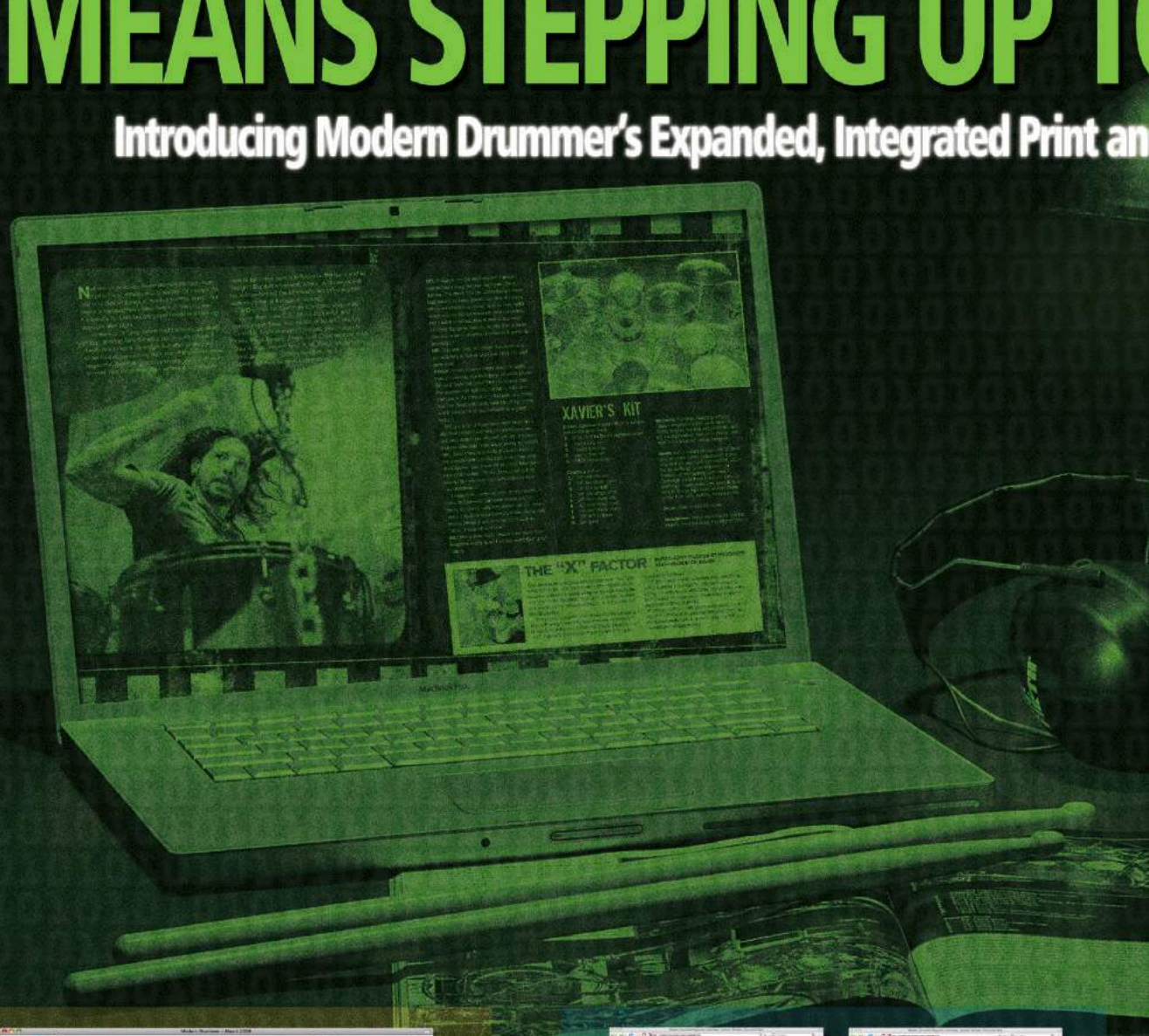

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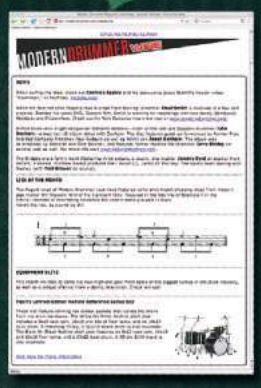

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Hiromi's

MARTIN VALIHORA

TIME CONTROL

Working with diminutive Japanese synth and piano master Hiromi, Slovakian born drummer Martin Valihora proves he is a monster in the making.

Hiromi's last four records, *Brain* (2004), *Spiral* (2005), *Time Control* (2007), and *Beyond Standard* (2008, all Telarc), cover terrain that includes seriously interactive acoustic jazz trio, flaming RTF–styled fusion, and down-and-dirty funk. Throughout, Valihora almost never repeats himself, endlessly creating new approaches and novel ways to enter Hiromi's galvanic eighty-eight key assault of sounds.

Time Control's opening track, "Time Difference," is a whiz-bang blowout of fulminating dynamics, seamless straight-ahead jazz, and 2 and 4 wallop. Valihora's touch stands out instantly, floating his ride cymbal like surf spray, kicking his bass drum like Zeus, and whopping backbeats on his left-side snare with a vengeance. His reactions to Hiromi's waves of synth and guitarist Dave "Fuse" Fiuzynski's wiry leads recall everyone from Will Kennedy and Lenny White to even Carl Palmer and lost legend Bobby Caldwell.

When Valihora hits his solo section at full burn, his toms boom and his single strokes fly, but it's the considerable sting of his pocket that sticks with you. Likewise, Valihora's dry heat funk in "Time Out" recalls the mighty Yogi Horton, and the sci-fi rim-click perambulations of "Real Clock Vs. Body Clock" summon thoughts of Vinnie Colaiuta (*Shut Up And Play Yer Guitar*–era Zappa) and Dennis Chambers.

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Alex Solca

Hiromi's latest, *Beyond Standard*, attempts to stylize standards with a newfangled approach. Valihora's drums are much fatter and upfront in the mix than on previous Hiromi records, allowing us to hear even deeper into his mighty rhythmic squalls. His painterly approach shines on opener "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise," his cymbals dance and shimmer in "Clair De Lune," he burns a Latin punch in "Caravan" (a legendary forum for drummers throughout the years), and he drops some seriously popping, hard-edged gut-punching funk in the Hiromi original "Ue Wo Muite Aruko."

A natural drummer from a family of musicians, Martin attended the Conservatory of Music in Bratislava at age fourteen, and a few years later enrolled at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Along the way he played with a variety of European artists, such as MIDI (Bratislav pop), as well as American '70s soft rock with Pure Prairie League, and Beantown fusion with Waking Vision, before joining Hiromi's trio in 2004.

Valihora is typical of the new-century musician: traveling between two homes (NYC and Bratislava), playing multiple gigs, finding time to practice as the gigs and flights allow, and always searching for ultimate expression, ultimate creativity, and ultimate control. In the end, it's all about time control.

Bratislava To Berklee

MD: You come from a very musical family: Your dad played bass, and your mother was a vocalist. When you began studying drums at the age of five, what did you focus on?

Martin: Because my father and mother were full-time musicians and I was with my nanny and my sister, I would naturally answer that I started playing drums before I was born. But I had a really strong passion for drums since I was two or three years old. Every year I' d dream that I would play drums. My father was always on the road, and I didn' t have a chance to study. But when I started to study at age twelve I was already full of passion for the drums.

My dad brought me to a pre-conservatory school for kids who wanted to study drums. When I started to play, the first time I sat on the drumset, I could already play a simple beat. Then he brought me to study with his drummer. We would choose two songs. I remember one of the first we played was Level 42' s "Lessons In Love," a funk tune, from their Running In The Family album. It was important to me—such a killing bass player, songs, and melodies. I also studied the basic rudiments on the pad with that teacher.

MD: Did you study from Stick Control?

Martin: No. We didn' t have specific books; we didn' t use Ted Reed' s Syncopation, for instance. My teacher didn' t know that those are considered the drummer' s bibles in the States. I got into those books later.

I would learn songs and write down the beats from albums like Level 42' s Running In The Family. Then I attended the Conservatory of Music in Bratislava at age fourteen. I studied with a teacher who had jazz experience. He taught me drumset. We did some things from Steve Gadd' s books, some paradiddles and rudiments, and also some classical studies based on Czechoslovakian teachers. I studied there from ' 90 to ' 92. I also studied snare drum, marimba, triangle, timpani, and xylophone.

MD: Was it after conservatory that you began playing in the band MIDI?

Martin: Yes. The conservatory was a full-time school for classical musicians. I met with MIDI when I turned sixteen. This was a legendary pop band in our country. I was practicing with them and preparing for touring. But I was about to be kicked out of school; there was final rehearsal with the band for the tour, so I didn' t go to school. They kicked me out, and that' s how I joined the professional world.

MD: Were you playing any jazz then?

Martin: MIDI played pop, but in school jazz and fusion was popular, like Dave Weckl' s Back To Basics. That was influential. Dave was great and so popular. We would all practice Dave Weckl licks at school.

MD: Did you have strong drum technique before you went to Berklee?

Martin: I had chops in terms of some particular styles of music, but I didn' t have technique. To have chops and play some pop or fusion is one thing. To have a technique means to be able to cover different styles of music. I didn' t have that because I didn' t know how to use it with Latin rhythms, or swing, or all those rhythms.

I started to play jazz when I was eighteen, and the people who played it liked what I did so they took me under their wings and taught me jamming, jazz style. Then I joined the main big band in Czechoslovakia when I was twenty. That' s how I learned this other side of jazz and heard Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Roy Haynes, Bill Stewart, Jeff "Tain" Watts,

"I DON'T LIKE PATTERNS! I ALWAYS WANT TO SURPRISE MYSELF AND SURPRISE PEOPLE AROUND ME."

MARTIN'S KIT

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute
- **A.** 5 1/2x14 Maple Custom Absolute snare
- **B.** 7 1/2x10 tom
- **C.** 8x12 tom
- **D.** 12x14 floor tom
- **E.** 14x16 floor tom
- **F.** 16x18 bass drum (or 16x20) (Martin occasionally adds a 7x8 tom and a 6 1/2x13 Musashi Oak left-side snare)

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" K Constantinople hi-hats
2. 16" K Custom Session crash
3. 20" K Constantinople Hi Bell thin ride
4. 6" A Custom splash (inverted) on top of 8" K Custom Dark splash
5. 22" K Custom High Definition ride
6. 16" A Custom EFX crash
7. 22" K Constantinople medium-thin ride
8. 20" K Constantinople flat ride

Percussion: LP Mambo cowbells and Jam Block
Hardware: Yamaha
Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter, Diplomat snare-side, coated Ambassadors on tom batters (for jazz, clear for fusion), with clear Diplomats on bottoms, Powerstroke 3 on bass drum batter with black Yamaha logo head on front
Sticks: Vater Cymbal Stick Ball and Sugar Maple Recording models, Vater brushes

and Brian Blade. Of course, the technique from pop helped me—I didn' t have to go through the basic stuff because I already had it. But I had to learn how to use that technique for jazz.

MD: When did you enroll at Berklee?

Martin: January 2000 was my first semester.

MD: What did you focus on there?

Martin: It was my dream. A few years earlier, in 1994 when I was seventeen, I' d been in the US for one year in Aspen, Colorado, playing with musicians who had been in the band Pure Prairie League. [Sings their ' 70s hit, " Amy."] My uncle lives in Aspen, and he introduced me to the band at a winter gig. I sat in with them and from that moment I stayed.

Pure Prairie League is a really good band. All kinds of musicians would sit in when they came to town. It was the hookup. The band really liked my drumming, though they said, " In two years, you' ll be playing with everybody and you' ll forget us." We had a really good time.

After one year I went back to Slovakia, but my dream was to return to the US to play. All those years from the age of eighteen to twenty-three, I was just focusing on going to Berklee to play and study. It was hard to get a visa then, so I went for a summer program. They didn' t give me a visa, so I tried again. I applied for regular study, and then they gave me a visa. I got to Berklee and met beautiful musicians, and I joined the band Waking Vision.

Woodshedding

MD: What did you study at Berklee?

Martin: Everything. I took many ensembles: jazz, funk, Latin. I wanted to play everything, all styles. I had already played all kinds of styles, so when I got to Berklee I was already familiar with jazz. But I needed

Hiromi On Valihora

A Surprise In Every Package

Jazz piano star Hiromi says there were many reasons why she chose Martin Valihora to record her last four albums. In fact, "I write music with Martin in mind," she reveals from her home in Tokyo.

Hiromi feels great drumming can inspire great melodies. "When I first saw Martin in 2002 at Berklee, playing with the band Waking Vision," she says, "I thought he had strong chops. But I could also tell he was different—a unique and very colorful player. When he played grooves he was amazing, and when he soloed his drums sounded like a melodic instrument. He really made me realize that drums *can* be a melodic instrument."

It's Valihora's "musical" concept that inspires the keyboard great. "Martin really 'sings' with his toms and cymbals," Hiromi insists. "He creates music, he creates melodies. I hired Martin for the trio in 2003. I didn't need to audition him. I knew how strong he was as a player. What I've learned since is that Martin has amazing ears. He always picks up my new songs very quickly. He can play a new song within seconds."

Hiromi also appreciates the drummer's adventurous attitude on stage. "Martin is always taking risks," she says. "I want the trio to find new landscapes every day. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But one thing that impresses me the most about Martin is that he continues to surprise me, and we've been working together now for over five years. He always seems to come up with a rhythm that I would never expect. That's his natural resource."

MEINL

Valuable Valihora

His Best Recordings

Artist	Album
Waking Vision	The Ancient Bloom
Waking Vision	Of The Waking Vision
Hiromi	Spiral
Hiromi	Time Control
Hiromi	Beyond Standard
Hiromi	Brain
Ron Affif	Ron Affif Trio
Zuzana Mojzisova	Zuzana Mojzisova
Dan Brantigan Quartet	Becoming
David Koller	Nic Neni Nastalo
Alvik	Cold June

His Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
Dave Weckl	Back To Basics (DVD)	Dave Weckl
Andy Narell	Slow Motion	Will Kennedy
Pat Metheny	Trio 99>00	Bill Stewart
John McLaughlin	Tokyo Live	Dennis Chambers
Brian Blade Fellowship	Perceptual	Brian Blade
Jeff "Tain" Watts Quintet	Detained At The Blue Note	Jeff "Tain" Watts
Kim Burrell	Everlasting Life	Doobie Powell
John Coltrane	Interstellar Space	Rashied Ali
John Coltrane	My Favorite Things	Elvin Jones

a deeper understanding. So I chose many ensembles, and, of course, I took labs as well: Latin lab, Brazilian lab—everything I didn' t know, I wanted to learn. I studied jazz chart reading, all kinds of technique.

MD: What technique studies in particular?

Martin: I didn' t have particular technique lessons in terms of how to hold a stick. Every teacher would show you his own way. My technique studies were more about learning to play different styles and studying the tradition of the instrument.

MD: When you practiced drumset, what did you work on?

Martin: I did exercises like going from left to

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right, and right to left, on the drums with single strokes: L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R from snare drum to the toms, back and forth. You have to know how to specifically move your body. If you do just the snare you're only staying in one place. I simply thought I should be able to develop my ability to move in any direction around the drums. I would do those types of exercises for thirty minutes, non-stop.

"YOU HAVE TO PLAY A LOT OF STRAIGHT-AHEAD AND LISTEN TO IT EVERY DAY TO GET TO A POINT WHERE YOU HAVE AN AUTHENTIC VOICE."

MD: Can you be more specific about these types of examples?

Martin: Start on the snare and move down the toms. Do three strokes on the snare [LRL], two strokes on your first tom [RL], two strokes on the next tom [RL], and then three on floor tom [RLR]. Without stopping, reverse that, leading with your left up the toms to the snare. Just keep going back and forth, up and down the drums.

MD: Was your jazz playing already up to par when you arrived at Berklee?

Martin: No. My jazz playing is something I will continue developing for my entire life. I'll always be working on it. I'm always trying to cultivate that elegant sound—not just the hands, but the body. At Berklee, I just tried to create that sound, as well as new sounds and new ways to play what I heard from other people who were also studying at Berklee.

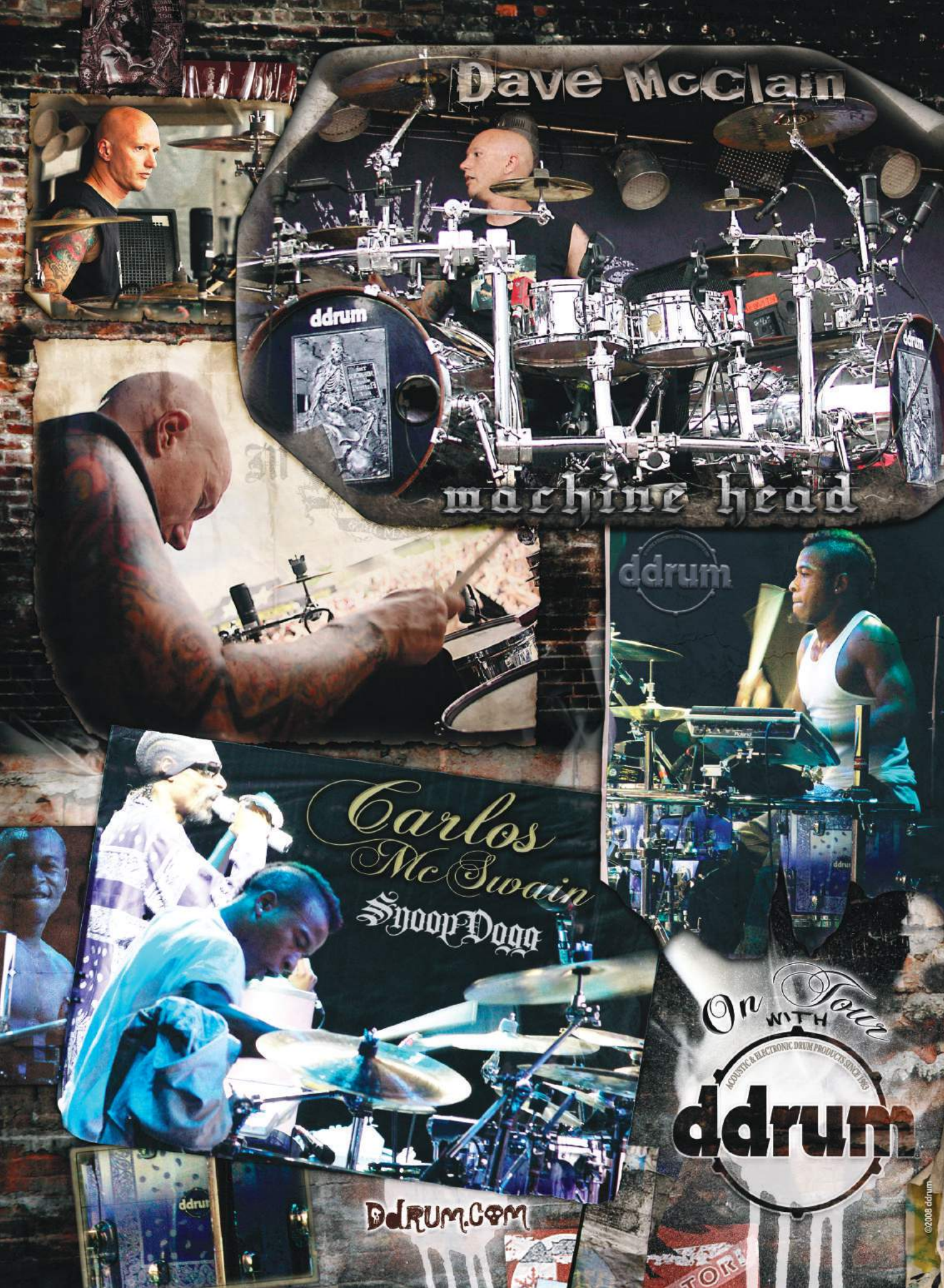
One of the strongest cats at the school at that time was Kendrick Scott, who now plays with Terence Blanchard. He had a beautiful cymbal touch. He was five years younger than me, but he was very mature. I also focused on people like Jeff "Tain" Watts and copied his sound. With that, I somehow tried to adjust and consider how my hands should work, to see what my hands were doing and improve them.

Hittin' With Hiromi

MD: Listening to your work with Hiromi, you flow so well between acoustic jazz, funk, and fusion. What's the key to navigating those different styles within her music?

Martin: The absolutely important key to navigating is to try to be what you hear. Not just play it, but try to feel it within yourself. It means that when I see Jeff Watts at Zinc Bar in New York, and I'm two inches from him, I'm absolutely eating up everything he's doing. When I see Vinnie Colaiuta or Steve Gadd, I'm absolutely trying to absorb what they do. When I come to the drums and am faced with a certain musical moment, I try to bring that energy I heard from them.

Marcus Miller once told me a very important thing: "You can copy anything, but it will come out differently when you play it. If you do it, do it fully, not just a little bit. Copy it altogether like you're playing what they were playing, like you know what they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were feeling."

MD: How did you do that? Did you transcribe Watts and Colaiuta?

Martin: No. I would simply hear what they did and try to copy it. I never transcribed anybody. I just tried to move as they move.

MD: With Hiromi, do you rehearse the music heavily before recording the albums, or have you already played the songs on the road?

Martin: Some of the songs on the albums are prepared in rehearsal. We always have music from Hiromi before the session. She gives us demo recordings of solo piano along with charts. That gives us good preparation before we play it. In some cases, we had the chance to perform the songs onstage before we recorded them.

MD: Does Hiromi offer specific drumming ideas, or does she leave it up to you?

Martin: It's a bit of both. For some parts, she is very particular about the sound or a specific figure or source. She thinks compositionally. She needs that color. But everything else is up to us. Of course, it's always changing. If you hear a tour in its entirety you can hear the evolution of the music.

MD: In Hiromi's "Return Of Kung Fu World Championship" [from Spiral], as well as other funk-oriented tracks, you tune your snare drum very tight, muted and dry. Is that the second snare drum, and where is it placed?

Martin: The second snare drum is tuned two different ways, either really high or really low. It's placed to the left of my hi-hat. I use it between my main strokes, playing some really strong pocket patterns on it or drum 'n' bass–style patterns.

MD: On the title song from Time Control, and elsewhere in Hiromi's music, you play very fast rim-click patterns. You do them again in "Real Clock Vs. Body Clock." It's a very tight, propulsive pattern.

Martin: Everything in your mind brings you to create new sounds and new ways and new colors. I like tight sounds, concrete sounds, that create all kinds of shapes. That's why I sometimes mute the snare with my left hand while playing the rim and rimshot with the stick. Sometimes I can use it for a groove. I try to find new things that sound cool.

MD: When you're playing that left-hand rim-click pattern, is the right hand typically playing the hi-hat?

Martin: Sometimes I'll play another rim, like on the tom, with my right hand. In "Caravan" [from Beyond Standard], I do that. When I play a groove, I like to change it up. I might try to get various ride sounds—hi-hat, click, rims, a second hi-hat.... I like colors.

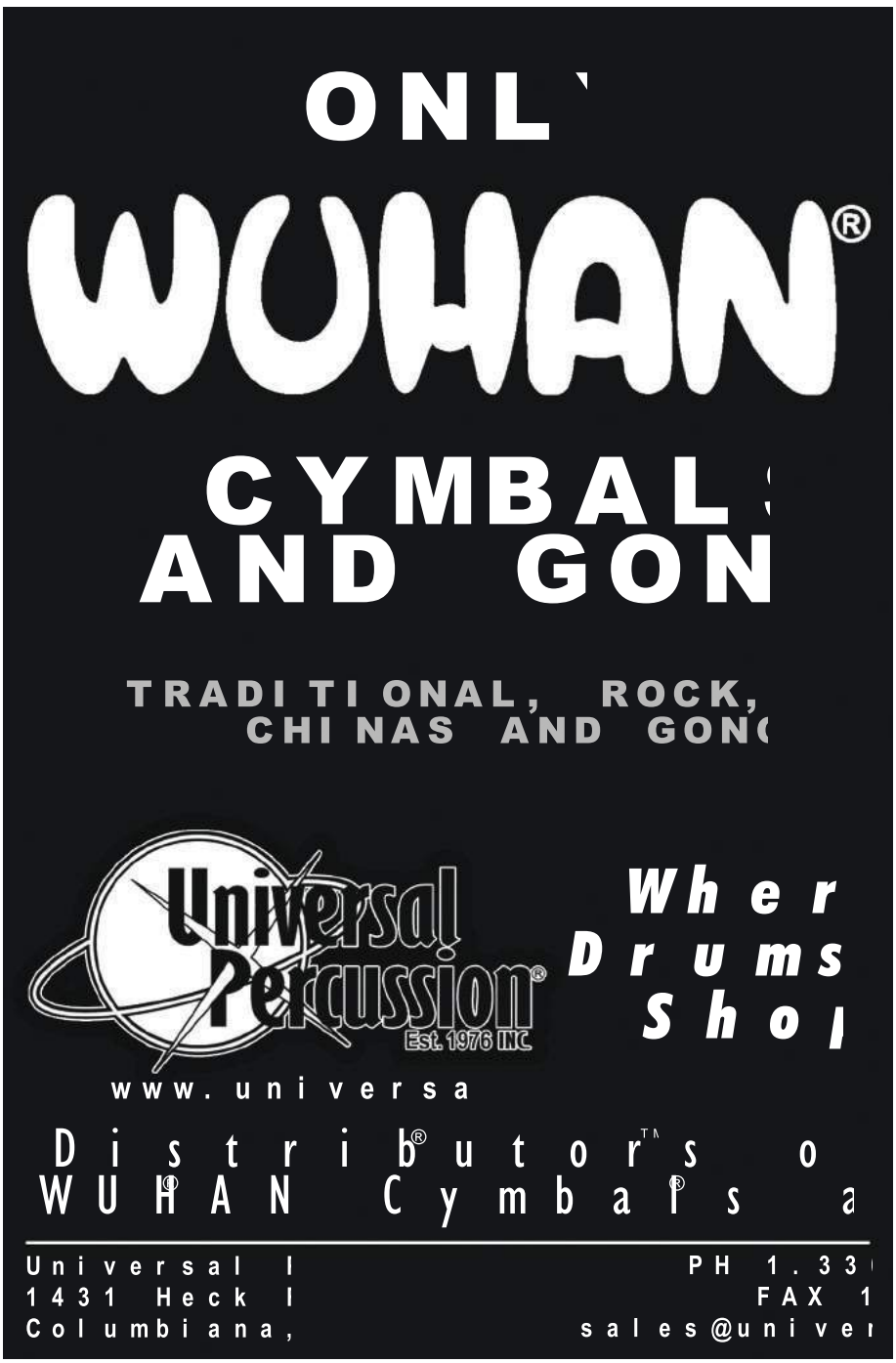
MD: "Time Control" is kind of a fusion jazz waltz. Was any one song from Time Control particularly difficult to work up?

Martin: "Time Control" is difficult, but it's my favorite song. It uses an African bass drum pattern as the foundation of the groove. I like that rhythm. I also solo over it. It's a hard song to perform, but it flows.

On Time Control, I feel that my playing evolved from the previous recording, Spiral. Spiral was very compositional, very artful, very acoustic with electric combination. It was about creating all kinds of moments. But Time Control is more open. It has electric guitar and other electric instruments. So I played a more R&B, punchy, and Gospel-influenced style. I also played more fusion stuff.

MD: On Beyond Standard, it sounds like Hiromi wanted to extend the standards format. Did she discuss her goals for the record with you?

Martin: Yes. She wanted to take standards and apply her own vision to the arrange-



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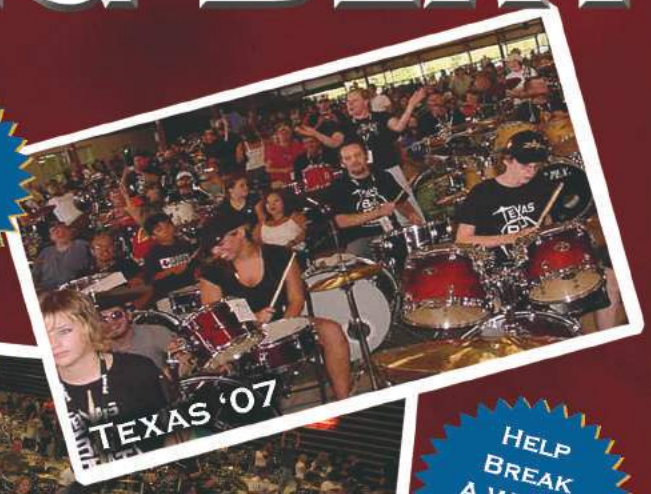

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ments. We went through the material, she explained her compositional approach and what she wanted to hear in particular moments, and we tried to bring it all together.

MD: Your drums are better recorded on Beyond Standard than on Hiromi's previous albums.

Martin: I'm always thinking about how I want to sound when we record. On Spiral, I chose acoustic sounds. On Time Control, it was more fusion and pocket-oriented. I expanded my kit for it, from 12/14/16 toms to 8/10/12/14/16, and two snares. I was also thinking, "How can I be interesting, different, comfortable, and hip?" We also change studios for every album, and this last one was recorded at Allaire in upstate New York.

Selecting Styles

MD: One of the great things about your drumming is that you don't play patterns. You're always creating and improvising in the moment. You have a huge arsenal to draw from without relying on stock patterns.

Martin: I don't like patterns! I always want to surprise myself and surprise people around me. Those little surprises make the moment interesting. I always like to discover new things, and when I play the song I don't want to play it like I did yesterday.

That said, one of my biggest heroes is Steve Gadd, and he plays patterns. But he does it in such a way that you're never tired of them. They fit every musical situation he plays in. He moves the music magically, whether he's playing with Chick Corea, David Sanborn, Paul Simon, or James Taylor. Gadd creates such a foundation. And even though I don't play patterns, his influence is still inside of me. You always like what you're not doing.

MD: I hear strains of Will Kennedy in your drumming....

Martin: He's my first influence. I tried to copy him quite a bit.

MD: I also hear Dave Weckl. How did you balance the influence of those two fusion giants in your drumming?

Martin: If I'm playing straight-ahead, you'll hear some other influences in my playing, too. But the fusion element is in there. I feel you have to play a lot of straight-ahead and listen to it every day to get to a point where you have an authentic voice.

MD: When you solo, are you literally thinking of different drummers? The solo in "My Favorite Things" from Beyond Standard sounds inspired by Vinnie Colaiuta.

Martin: Like I said earlier, you have to become another drummer when you're developing your abilities. But now when I'm playing I don't always think of other drummers. I might wonder what a particular drummer might do to a piece of music. What might Horacio Hernandez do to make a Latin piece work? I want to play authentically. I need to apply as much of that flavor to the music as possible to make it work. So I think of the masters sometimes, what they would do, how they would shape it, the feel they would add.

Regarding that solo, I wasn't thinking of Vinnie, I was thinking of Elvin Jones! The arrangement is completely different from the popular John Coltrane version that Elvin played on, but I tried to think "open," as he did.

MD: When you have the time, what types of things do you practice?

Martin: Single strokes, always trying to reach new tempos, intensity, and articulation. I also work on flam and paradiddle combinations. If you play something, it needs to be clear. Sometimes I practice with music or a sequenced track, maybe funk or R&B. But no matter what you play, it's important to always articulate clearly and be consistent.

MD: Your drumming covers so much ground: It can be delicate, aggressive, flexible, burning.... Are these things you can practice, or is it a mindset?

Martin: It's a mindset. To be honest, the time when I can sit and practice to develop my own voice is gone. We're playing all the time and always traveling somewhere. Sometimes, if we're doing a residency somewhere, I'll practice for a couple of hours before a gig. But that is a rare occurrence. I'm fortunate to be so busy with Hiromi and have several other projects I do in between. So for me, the most important thing is the mindset I have on the gig.

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Jason McGerr

LIFE AWAY FROM THE KIT

Pro Drummers Feeding Their Muse

by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann

Back in 1997, when I was studying jazz performance at New School University, I used to wear a hat all the time because I didn't want to take the time away from practicing to get a haircut. I literally didn't realize it was okay to do other things away from drums, because I thought I had to practice every chance I got to keep up with everybody else. But in time I started to burn out, and I even lost some of the excitement for drums that I originally had when I started playing as a child.

Luckily I learned that living, eating, and breathing drums isn't always the best approach—in fact, it can seriously limit our improvement at the instrument and the depth of what we have to say on it.

When a songwriter writes a song, he or she probably wrote that song because of an emotional or personal experience, rather than just focusing on the notes and the music. Drumming should be looked at no differently: When we drummers create, we should be expressing what we feel inside, and what we feel inside is determined to a large part on what happens to us on the outside.

Inarguably, life experience helps shape a person's musical personality. Your upbringing, hobbies, relationships, and personal life play a huge part in what you sound like at your instrument. In fact, we thrive on the creativity that we experience in other aspects of our lives. Largely, it's what keeps us going. We're married, divorced, or single…we have kids, we don't have kids…we pay mortgages or we live at home…and we have to deal with the ups and downs of life, just like everybody else.

These days I do plenty of other things when I'm not touring or when I have some downtime away from the drums—like exercise, read, and hang with my six-year-old daughter, Chloe. As I write this article in a café, I'm getting ready to pick her up from kindergarten. Does it get more real than that?

I believe that in order to fully understand the way artists perform, we should know more about what motivates and inspires them. This article is an attempt to discover what makes the drummers we love and respect tick (besides a metronome, that is). To do that, we asked each of them the same question: What interests or hobbies do you have, besides the drums, that help keep your playing creative and fresh?

ZACHARY ALFORD Gwen Stefani

To keep my drumming fresh I actually like to listen to a lot of older music, in particular stuff like Zeppelin or Al Green, and early soul and R&B stuff I haven' t heard before. A lot of those old recordings have a sound and finesse that I find very inspiring. Those guys had a great feel too, and that' s what inspires me most.

I' m also an artist, and I tend to spend a lot of time drawing and sketching on my time off. I don' t know what it contributes to my playing, except time away, which lets my mind clear out. I also think having interests other than music helps you to be a more interesting person to be around. There' s a lot more to life than any one thing—and not nearly enough time to enjoy all of them—so my philosophy is, get all you can!

Another great thing for any musician is to compose original music in your spare time, or analyze albums you like. When you step away from your drum stool, you think more like a producer, who needs only the essential elements in a drum part. There' s no room for overplaying when you think about the song as a whole, and that helps you to mature as a player.

BRIAN CHASE Yeah Yeah Yeahs

I practice Ashtanga Yoga regularly, about five days a week. Ashtanga is a pretty vigorous style designed to cleanse and purify in a spiritual as well as physical sense. Through yoga, I' ve been forced to confront fears and emotional blocks that make themselves evident during the process of " opening." And that' s why we play music, right? To be open and honest and to share our life experience with everyone else in order to make the world a better place. I also enjoy calling up friends to go on excursions " eating" our way through New York City, especially in Brooklyn and Queens.

JASON McGERR Death Cab For Cutie

When we finished our last tour in 2006, I knew it was going to be nine months before we would begin work on the next Death Cab record. At first I planned to use my time practicing and writing music, since I hadn' t done much of either during the last two album cycles. I was in great physical shape to play, but had very little creative energy to fuel any time behind the kit. I don' t think I spent more than a few hours on my drums before I discovered I just really needed a break.

Over the years I' ve become more and more interested in the engineering and recording process, and I found myself looking at pro audio gear rather than drums and cymbals. I felt like the more I knew about what went into making records, the more my playing would benefit. I had a small studio and practice space in my back yard, but it was too small. Once Death Cab went on break, I found a vacant building for rent not far from home, and I decided to check it out. There was one dividing wall in what used to be a cabinet shop, but somehow I saw a studio. I think I just needed a project or something. When I was a kid I always asked for tools for my birthday because I loved to build things, and once again, it was time to build something.

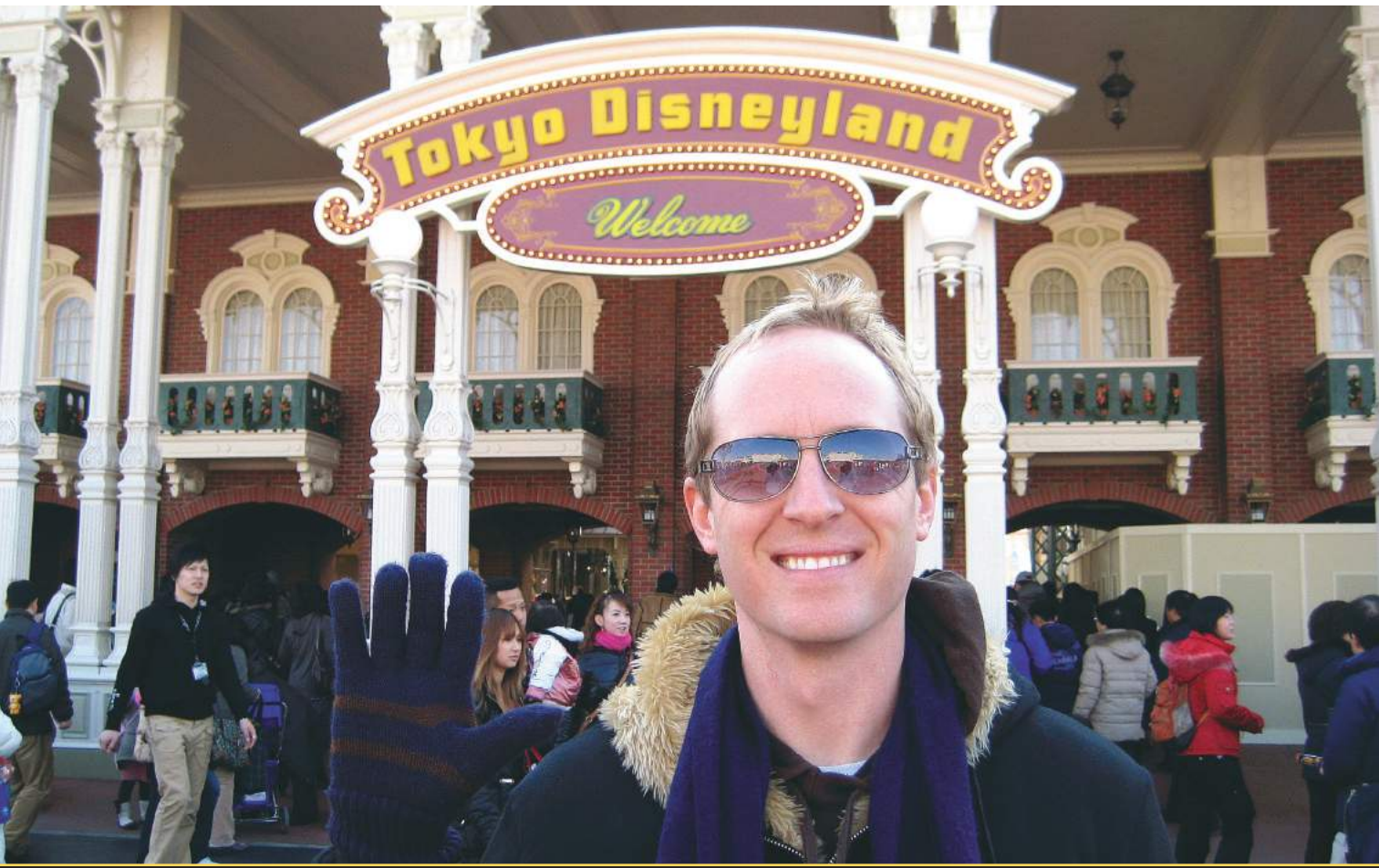
With the help of some friends, we put up extra-thick walls, double doors, and multi-layered windows. We stained concrete, put down carpet and floated wood floors, wired and ground the building, painted, plastered,

ERIC SINGER KISS • Alice Cooper

I've found over time that you need balance in your life. It can't be only about drums! Finding hobbies or outside interests is a great way to contribute to that balance. I love sports, collecting watches, working out at the gym, eating good food, and shopping in other cities around the world. Somehow there is a relationship with everything we do to drumming. Life itself has a rhythm, whether it's the pace of walking, or running to the watch ticking on our wrists. Sometimes life is all about timing, after all..". right place, right time."

and trimmed. I was involved in constructing the studio every day, and I had no time to practice. At one point, the sessions started happening while I was still making changes. A band would show up to record and I'd be hanging a door, wiring a light above the console, or taping an extra laminate of glass to an existing slider.

I've also been a fisherman longer than I've been a drummer, and most of that time I've spent fly fishing. I used to tie the flies in my box and would obsess about the quality



JOSH FREESE A Perfect Circle • NIN

A lot of things make up my personality, which obviously infiltrates my playing and any music that I make. I feel that my style has just as much to do with the things other than playing drums that I like as it has with actually playing and practicing.

When I'm not playing drums, the majority of my creative time is spent writing music. Recently I've also been experimenting with iMovie on my laptop while on tour, making bizarre little videos that I upload onto YouTube—not for money, but for fun and the love of it.

Heroes and influences of mine outside the music world would be Walt Disney, John Waters, Volvos, Hunter S. Thompson, my kids, Japanese food, Howard Hughes, David Lynch, Aqua Teen Hunger Force, magic, Crispin Glover, Miami, San Francisco, the South, practical jokes, and Disneyland. Most of my musical influences are songwriters; my favorite is probably Paul Westerberg.

I don't have many hobbies, other than music and film (listening to and making it, which is my first love and what I do most). I also like restaurants, hanging out at home with my family, traveling..did I mention Disneyland? I'm really into Disneyland. And the movie Wild At Heart.

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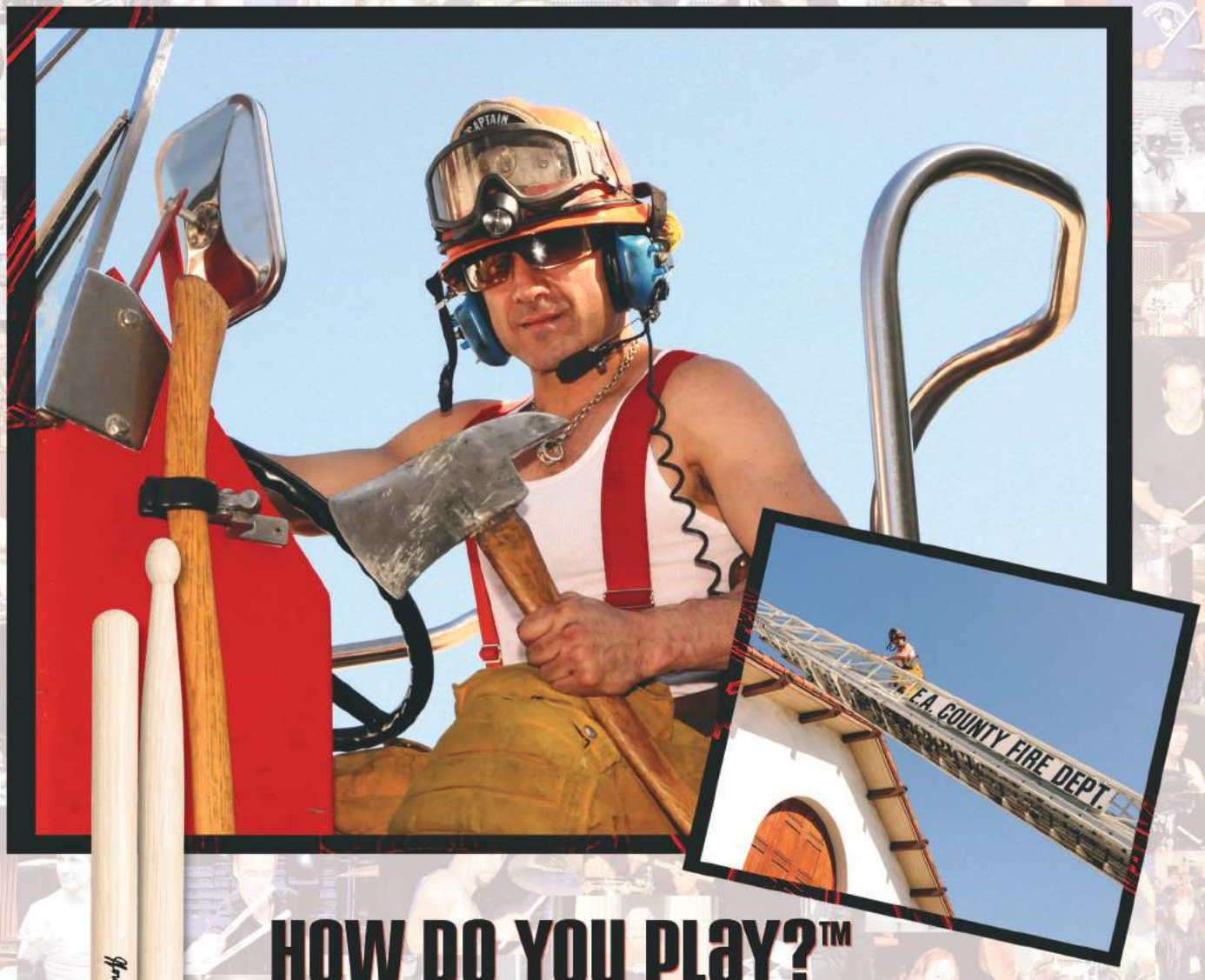

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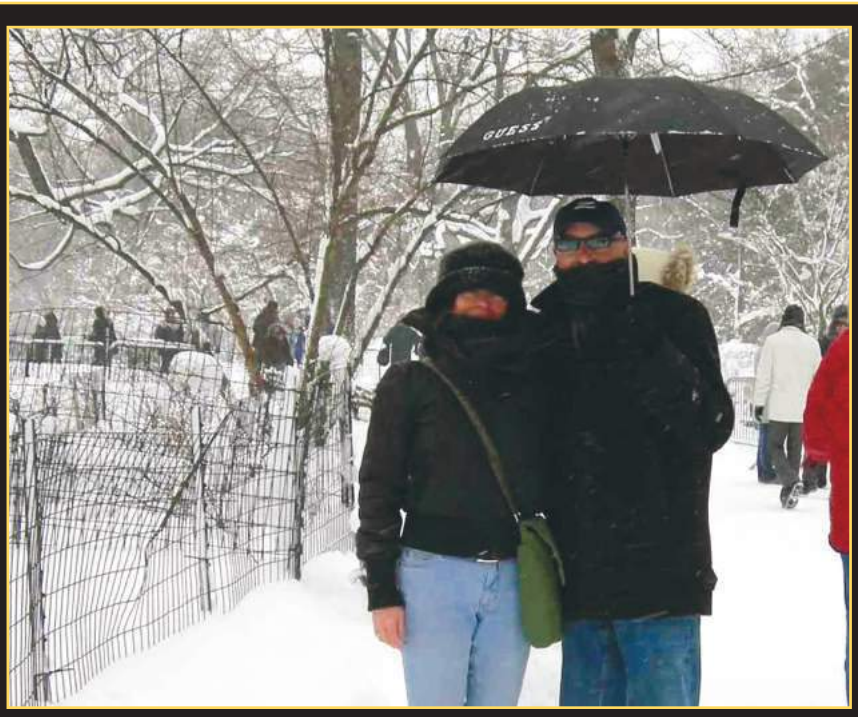
STEVE SMITH
Vital Information

I enjoy reading, and I' m always in the middle of at least one book, sometimes two at a time. I enjoy many different subjects, everything from spy-type novels to classics to biographies. I also love spending time with my wife, Diane. When I' m not on tour, we' re inseparable. We try to take a walk in Central Park every day that we' re in New York City. And we enjoy watching movies and going out for a good meal. My life is so active, with constant touring all over the world, that it' s quite nice to slow down when I' m not on tour and just enjoy some simple pleasures.



of feathers vs. synthetics and who manufactured the superior hook. Nowadays, out of convenience, I buy my tackle, though I still have boxes and boxes of materials.

In the Pacific Northwest we have some excellent river fishing for salmon and steelhead (the hardest-fighting fish I know), and whenever I get the chance I head out to the river either solo or with a friend. In a way, casting a fly rod is like executing a giant Moeller stroke, except you' re throwing a line up to 100 feet in front of you at a moving target (the fish in the water), instead of a rimshot between your knees.

I can' t even begin to tell you the level of detachment and relaxation I feel when I' m on the water. I don' t even need to be successful at catching any fish if the environment is right, and the focus required brings great rewards. You might think the sport is reserved for doctors and lawyers, but it' s for anyone with patience and an appreciation for the rhythm of a river.

CHAD WACKERMAN

I think everything going on in your life affects your art and the way you play. I' ve got a family and I have two kids. That affects the way I play. My son, James, has a disability called Fragile X Syndrome, and that affects the way I look at everything, including music. Years ago when Peter Erskine was playing with Joe Zawinul, he came back from a rehearsal and Zawinul told him, "You can' t play music until you' ve had kids!" What I think Joe meant was that it really makes you look at things differently. It actually makes you play differently; it can help you see beyond yourself and appreciate the bigger picture.

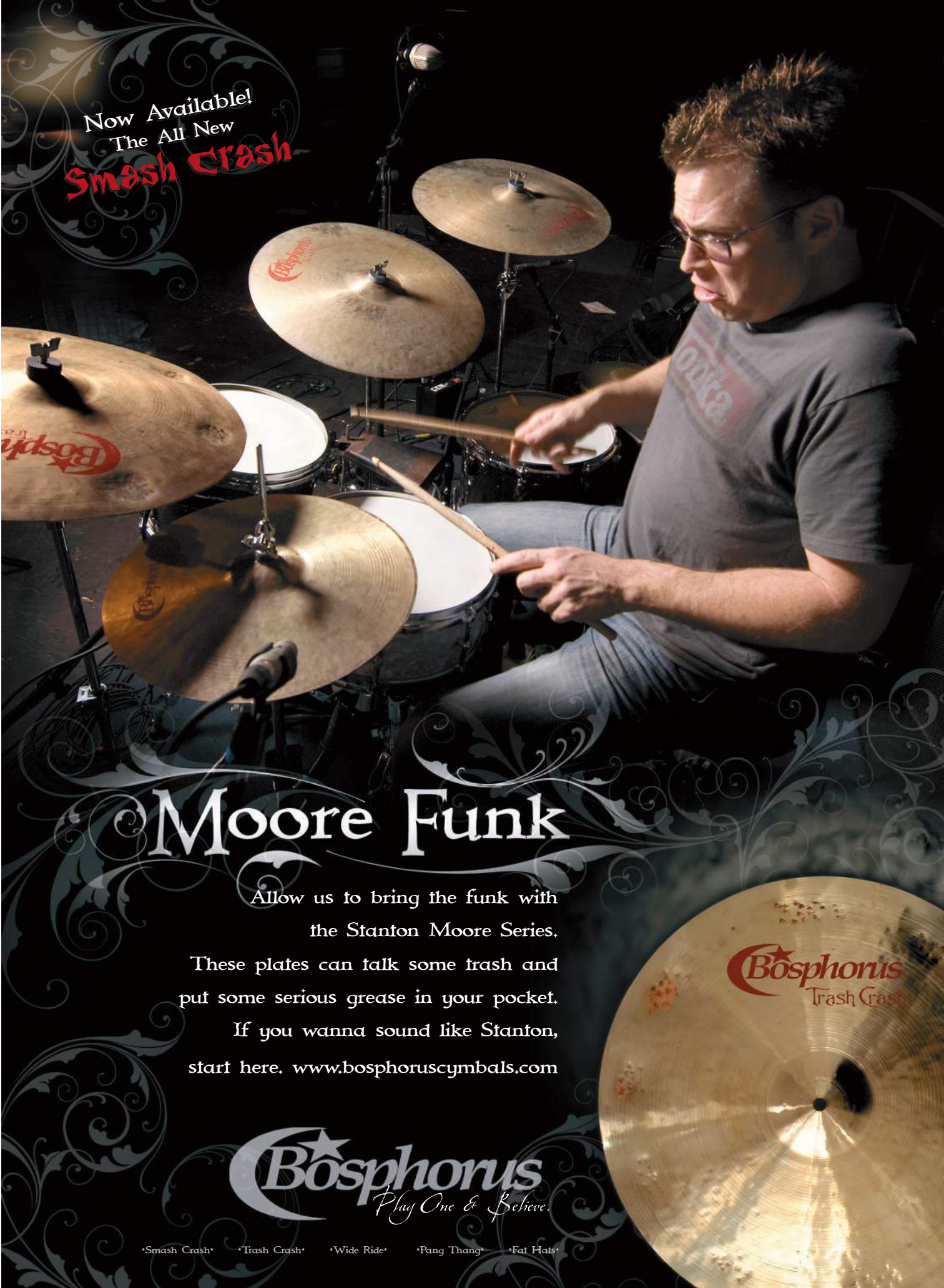
In terms of hobbies, I' ve got a very nice road bike that I like to ride. I' ve been exercising a lot lately, going to the gym maybe three days a week. It makes me feel better in general—keeps me less stressed and puts me in a good headspace. And I' m always composing for my solo recording projects. But it' s really the everyday moments that inspire the way I play and write music.

CLAUDE COLEMAN JR. ex-Ween

My time spent when I' m touring is best described as a veritable tsunami of creative, industrial, and life-oriented pursuits, mostly having little to do specifically with playing drums and more to do with the grand art of living, and having an unquenchable thirst for its experiences.

In between full-time everyday renovation of my 200-year-old colonial home in rural Hunterdon County, New Jersey, of which I' m doing all the carpentry and construction work for, I' m constantly writing and recording new music on every instrument for my group Amandla, doing Web/graphic design for myself and others, teaching rock to the whiz kids at the School Of Rock in New York, continuing physical therapy and bodywork from a near-fatal car accident I had six years ago, and taking as many trips as possible with my beautiful wife, Ila, back to New Zealand, the place of her birth and home of my extended family.

The drumset is a musical instrument dictated by its inherent physicality, and is similar to wind instruments like sax or trumpet, where the body and soul is the sound, the voice, and the character of the music you create. I am a firm believer in having a wide range of skills, talents, and life experiences to incorporate into the voice of my drumming. Get all your fingers dipped in many pies!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LIFE AWAY FROM THE KIT

MARCUS BAYLOR Yellowjackets

Growing up, my brothers and I were all very involved in sports. We played baseball, basketball, and football. Today, sports are still a major part of my life. I belong to the local YMCA and go regularly to exercise and play basketball. I even hit the treadmill for a mile or two.

I also enjoy spending time with my wife, Jean. We go to church together, and we enjoy going to the movies to relax. Church is important for me because it' s the place where I get spiritually replenished. In concerts you' re always giving out spiritually and emotionally to the music and fans. When I come off the road, I need to be spiritually and mentally replenished, and hearing the minister speak always refuels me.

One of my favorite things to do is play my Playstation and Nintendo Wii. I' m addicted! I play at my friends' houses and online with people I don' t know. For me, life isn' t always about playing and listening to music. It' s about being around family, friends, God, and people of other cultures. I do think it' s very important to find a hobby and something you love to do outside of music. It enables you to come back with a fresh mind and be musically creative. You' d be surprised what kind of inspiration you can get from just taking a break!

CHAD SMITH Red Hot Chili Peppers

I' m a water man. Surfing, scuba, sailing, diving, swimming, skiing, fishing—anything to do with being on, in, or under the water, I' m in. I love the sound of it. Hell, I just love to look at it! It' s so peaceful and balancing to be near water. It' s very calming for me, and I need that. And drink it, too. it' s good for ya!

KENNY ARONOFF John Fogerty

I' m really intense about trying to be as healthy as possible without being completely neurotic. I still drink wine and like to have fun, but I' m into staying fit and in shape. I focus on seven areas: cardio, lifting weights, stretching, maintaining a good diet, taking supplements, drinking lots of water, and getting good sleep. Those are my big seven (though I suck at the sleep part!). On a regular basis I' m always thinking about staying healthy.

I' m into sports in general, but the NFL is my thing. I' ve been to eleven Super Bowls, and I used to fly with the Indianapolis Colts when I was with Mellencamp and I was in Indiana more often. Also, I totally look up to and respect Lance Armstrong. That guy is a living hero to me. He survives cancer, overcomes that, and wins seven Tour De Frances? Not one. Not two. But seven. So he' s my hero, period!

STANTON MOORE Galactic

When I' m not drumming or doing music-related activities, I enjoy hanging out with my young daughter. This includes playing Legos, Wiffle Ball, Thomas The Train, finger painting, Play-Doh, teaching her to ride her new bike—or whatever she' s into that day. For myself, I go swimming or skateboarding, ride my bike around my neighborhood and along the Mississippi River,go to dinner and drink wine with my fiancé, read, watch some of our favorite shows on DVD—like Arrested Development, Flight Of The Conchords, CSI, Law And Order, Lost, Entourage—watch movies, and go to the beach or the spa.

LIBERTY DEVITTO ex–Billy Joel

You need a break from what you do. You need to clear the cobwebs out so you can create new stuff. When you do the same thing over and over again you stop creating. Since it takes a lot of stamina to play the drums, I ride a bicycle about twenty-five miles every day. I had an aerobics instructor that told me that what I had to do was something that was harder (physically) than drums. When you do something harder in your aerobics exercise, playing drums will become easier. You become like a musical athlete. Exercise helps me hit hard night after night and be consistent.

DENA TAURIELLO Antigone Rising

It seems as though my life is non-stop Antigone Rising, which vacillates between exciting and stressful! Obviously, being distracted and stressed does not serve us well as musicians. You can shed all day long, but tension will affect your playing.

It' s essential for me to have daily distractions, ones that allow me to clear myself of mental and physical stressors. First and

foremost, I go to the gym. I spend 60 to 90 minutes there each day, alternating between cardio workouts and strength training. These workouts also serve me well while on the road, helping me to withstand grueling travel and scheduling demands. Anything you can do while touring to preserve sanity and strength will greatly help your playing!

I've recently begun to dabble in home improvement work—nothing major, mind you, but I have learned some new skills in the past few months. The process of learning new skills, taking pride in executing them, and feeling creative in a new forum has given me something else to feel good about.

Any chance I have to feel great away from the drums makes me feel (and play) even better once I'm behind them.

PETER CRISS ex-KISS

I go to the gym four days a week. I do forty minutes on the track and then I do some weights and stretching. In those two hours I'll listen to all kinds of music. Recently I've been listening to a lot of classical music. I've especially developed a passion for Mozart and Beethoven—I can't get enough of it. It just soothes me. I also love to take long walks, like five miles, especially along the water. It helps me think clearly. And I enjoy bike riding—I've been riding my whole life—and I love the cinema; I love watching and studying black and white film.

I'm also a voracious reader, especially biographies. Right now I'm reading about Jimmy Stewart's life. I like reading books about life—not necessarily about God, but spirituality. I'm also a Catholic, and I go to Church every Wednesday. It helps my soul, and it gives me foundation in life.

These days I'm more involved with the world, and my energies are more directed towards it. It helps me not be so involved with me.

GENE TRAUTMANN Eagles Of Death Metal

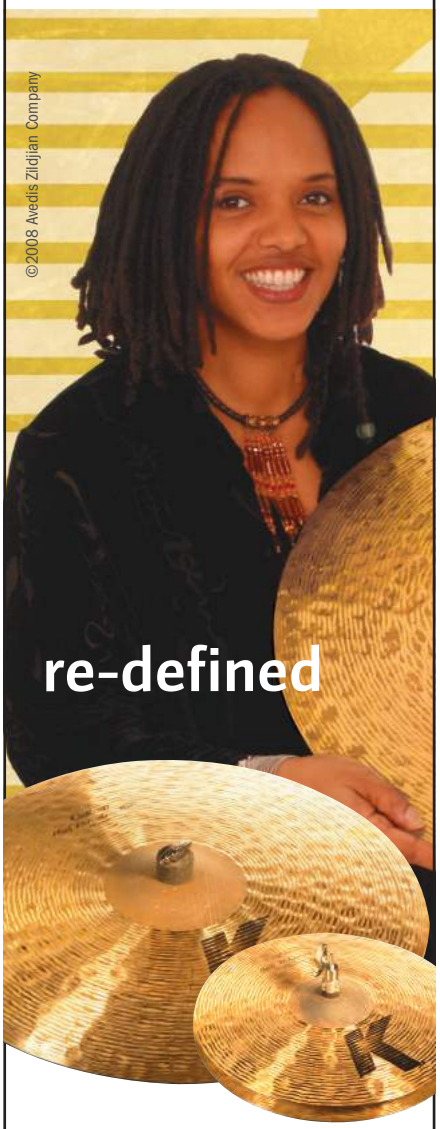
Like other artists and creative types, I need to keep a constant flow of new experience coming in to create and facilitate a freshness and newness in my approach to playing. Beyond private instruction and free-play with other drummers, I try to approach things from a holistic perspective. For me this means spirit, mind, and body. I do it in that order because I find, "As within, so without." In other words, whatever I'm going through internally, on a spiritual and psychological plane, manifests on the physical plane, i.e. my playing.

I try to enlarge upon my spiritual life through meditation and reading books from a variety of disciplines. I try to be mindful of ways in which I might be of service to others both within and beyond the music community. Part of this is accomplished through private instruction, which is a way of giving back, but other service I look for in an anonymous way. I try to take the time to have an experience of walking in nature or at least in solitude, and I make an honest effort to keep an open mind to other people's spiritual practices. I have also made changes to my diet and lifestyle, which have improved my sense of well-being. I've dropped weight, and I've improved my breathing, which hopefully translates to better performance.

I have spent time trying to listen as often as possible for the intuitive voice of creativity within. This may take the form of a rhythm playing from a passing car, the pattern of a person's footsteps, or the cadence of a coffee percolator. It may come simply from the experience of being completely engrossed in the activity that I'm involved in, without the accompanying mental static that can often invade the process.

BROOKS WACKERMAN Bad Religion

One relatively new hobby that has actually become more than a hobby, due to my commitment to it, is yoga. I've practiced this art form for the last three years—I usually get three practices in a week—and it has really helped my posture, patience, stamina, and overall focus. Obviously these four results have contributed to my becoming a better drummer. I practice yoga in my hotel room on tour, which is great because I loathe going to the gym. I highly recommend to any drummer to at least look into this. It takes time (just like anything), but you'll like the muscles that you'll develop. Also, my wife really inspires me; she's foxy.



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LIFE AWAY FROM THE KIT

IRA ELLIOT Nada Surf

I believe that not only drummers but musicians in general, especially young ones, often sacrifice a lot of time to their instrument while not realizing that while technique will certainly improve your playing, ideas can be just as influential. Think about the great jazz players of the ' 40s and ' 50s for a second, or The Beatles: Their music was not separate from the world, it was part of it, a response to it. Art, literature, fashion, politics—all informed their music, and they brought their insight and intelligence back to their compositions.

In my early twenties I was really trying to get a handle on singing and playing the drums at the same time, which seemed overly difficult for some reason. Then it dawned on me that I had never learned to breathe properly while playing. I' m self-taught and never had a teacher tell me to simply breathe and count out loud while practicing, a method that would have saved me years of frustration. So after analyzing myself a bit, I realized that I would grab a quick breath, hold it, play play play, grab another breath, play play play, and so on, which makes singing a note in pitch completely impossible. It didn' t help my timekeeping that much, either. Not breathing naturally while playing will just cloud your head. So I slowly trained myself to simply breath calmly while rocking out, which was not an easy thing to do. I still wrestle with it, but both my singing and drumming improved noticeably as a result.

And playing the guitar is something I' ve always loved to do, if just to be able to pick up an acoustic and sing a Beatles song. But it also gives me a perspective on how a guitarist feels the rhythm of a song, chordal construction and movement, the space between sung phrases, and so on, which all helps me when I decide on drum parts.

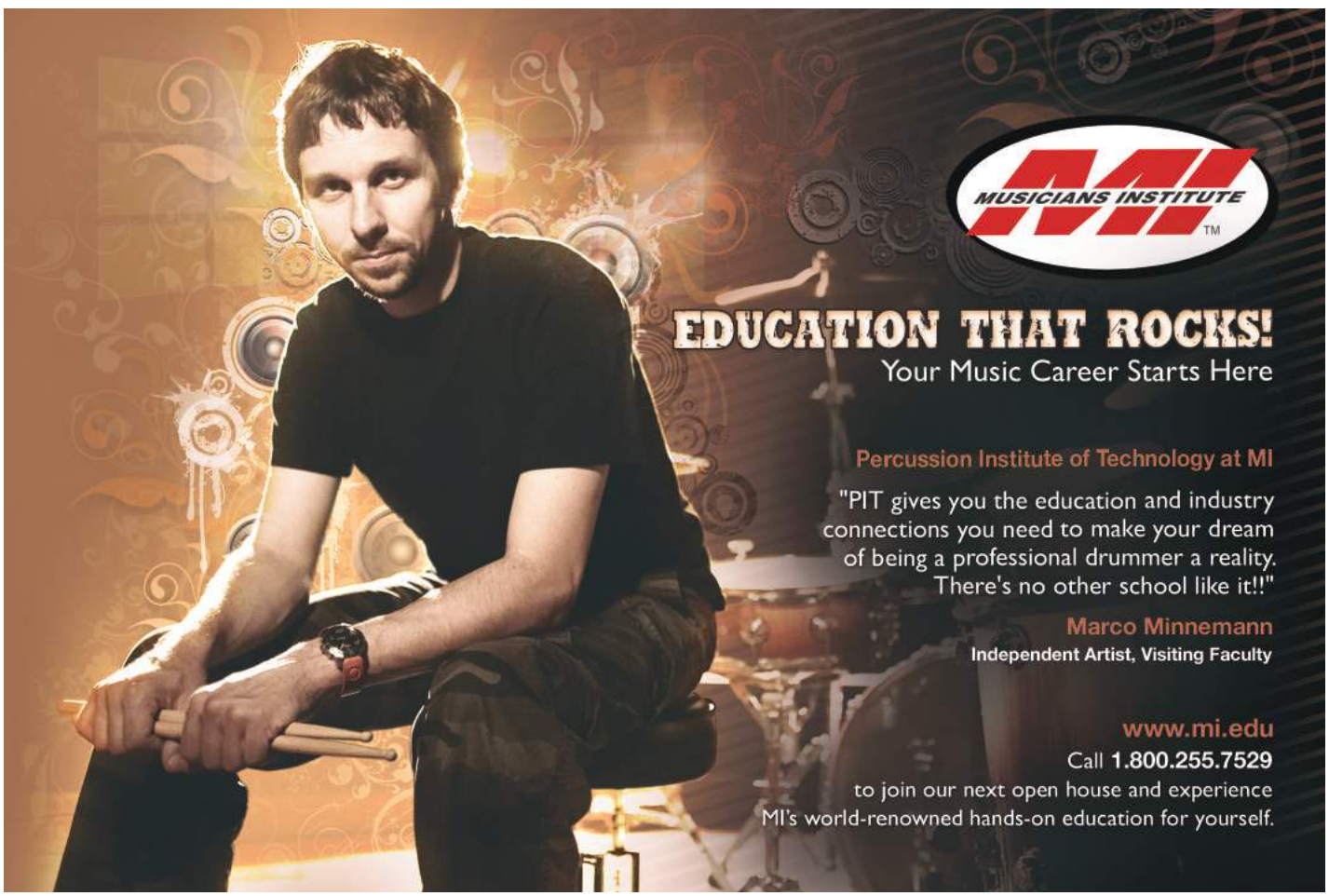
DENNY SEIWELL ex-Paul McCartney

My main interest at this point of my career has definitely become teaching. It keeps me inspired and fresh more than anything else. Having to stay current with today' s music and search out examples to use in teaching makes me explore music that I might have missed. Students always bring in a piece of music or a CD that I might not know, and then we both benefit.

As for my hobbies, I' m an avid golfer, and I try to play once or twice a week. The game sharpens my hand/eye coordination, my timing, my strength, my imagination, and hell, it' s played with sticks! When you' re playing well, it' s like when you' re really into playing music—almost an " out of body" experience. The other aspects are the fact that you have to maintain a high level of discipline, and make perfect strokes in all kinds of different situations. Many good drummers enjoy the game of golf, and are usually quite good, especially with chipping and putting, because of the touch and feel that are needed. It' s also a game that requires a very high degree of timing, which falls right into the drummer' s world. Golf has evolved to the point that it' s become a great game for everyone, and drummers are especially cool when they play.

TORRY CASTELLANO The Donnas

I like to run and lift weights because it gives me energy, which helps when I' m playing. I also think that listening to different kinds of music, anything with a good



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rhythm, helps me look at drums in a fresh way. And sugar helps everything!

LEWIS NASH Jazz Great

When I' m not traveling, working, or otherwise engaged in music-career activities, there are several things I enjoy doing. Being with my family is probably the most important non-career related activity that I enjoy. This August my wife Teresa and I celebrated our twentieth anniversary, and we have two beautiful, intelligent, and talented daughters, Kalena (eighteen) and Sarita (fifteen). When I' m home, I make an effort to be fully present and involved in their lives and activities, not preoccupied with other things I might want to do.

In this period of my life, I get inspiration from my wonderful parents, Walter and Willie Mae Nash, who celebrated their sixtieth anniversary this past March 15! I call and talk to them from all over the world, and I marvel at how they still laugh together, cook together, go fishing (their favorite pastime) together, and continue to love and provide counsel and advice to me and my siblings. (I have four sisters and a brother, who, along with my parents, live in my home town of Phoenix, Arizona.)

I enjoy exercising and working out. I prefer jumping rope for cardio. (I' ve been traveling with a jump rope for over twenty years.) I' m fond of " body weight" exercises, like pull-ups or push-ups. When I do lift weights, I train with my friend and personal trainer, drummer George Gray. I also do yoga and other stretching exercises.

Being a drummer is in many ways very similar to being an athlete. Body conditioning, knowing how to pace yourself, getting enough sleep and rest, and good nutrition are very important to me. I' ve been a strict vegetarian for thirty years now. (I can still remember my " epiphany" as a college student at Arizona State University back in 1978!) I' m also a sports fan (particularly NBA basketball) and enjoy watching all great athletes perform.

I make an effort every day to remain spiritually grounded. Making time for daily prayer, meditation, reading of spiritual texts, and reflection is something that I try to do on the road and at home. I also love reading (or watching) the biographies and life stories of inspirational people, past and present. The stories of Paul Robeson, Nelson Mandela, Dr. Ben Carson, and Immaculee Ilibagiza (the African woman who survived the massacre in Rwanda) immediately come to mind, but I also like the timeless stories of the triumph of the human spirit (i.e., Anne Frank, Gandhi, and Dr. M. L. King Jr.).

"Pistol" Pete Kaufmann spends his time between New York City and Los Angeles. He has performed with jazz legend Houston Person, vocalist Melba Joyce, David Bowie guitarist Carlos Alomar, and Robbie "Sea Hag" Mangano from Sound Of Urchin, and has toured America with Claude Coleman from Ween's own band, Amandla. Pete has performed all over the world, and is currently touring internationally in heavy metal duo Evil Beaver. For more on Pete, go to www.myspace.com/peterkaufmann.

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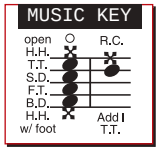
The Jimi Hendrix Experience's Mitch Mitchell

"Manic Depression"

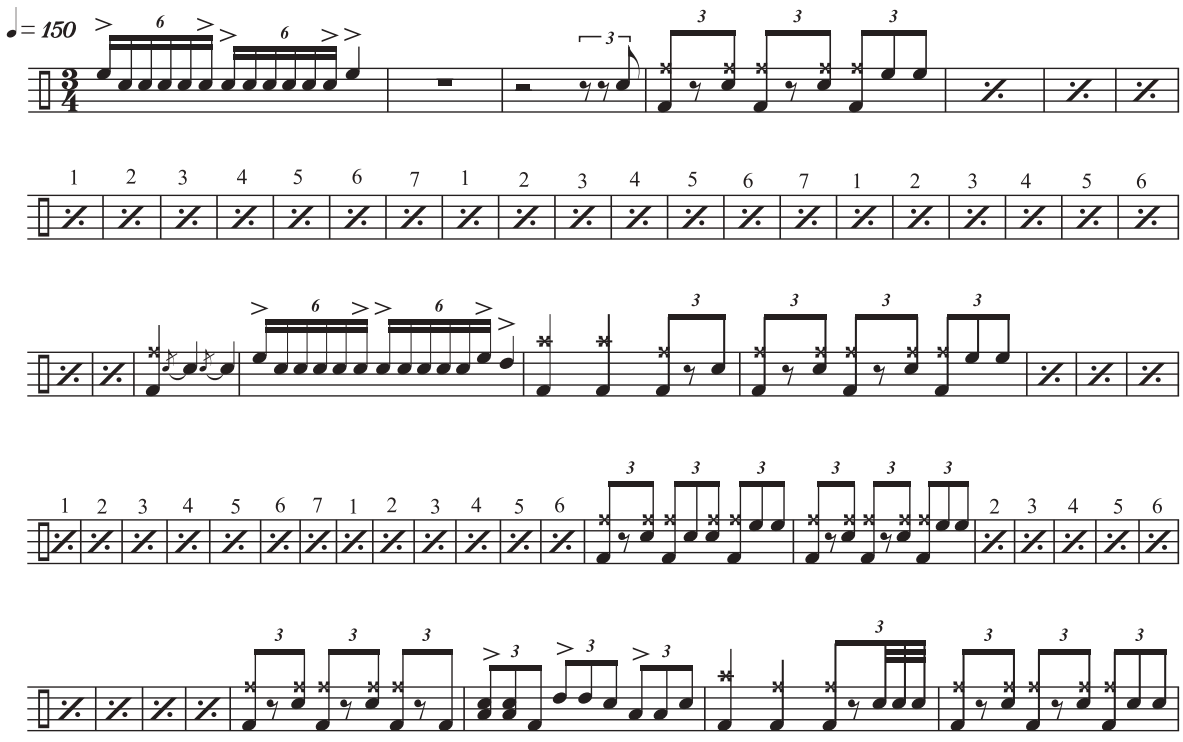
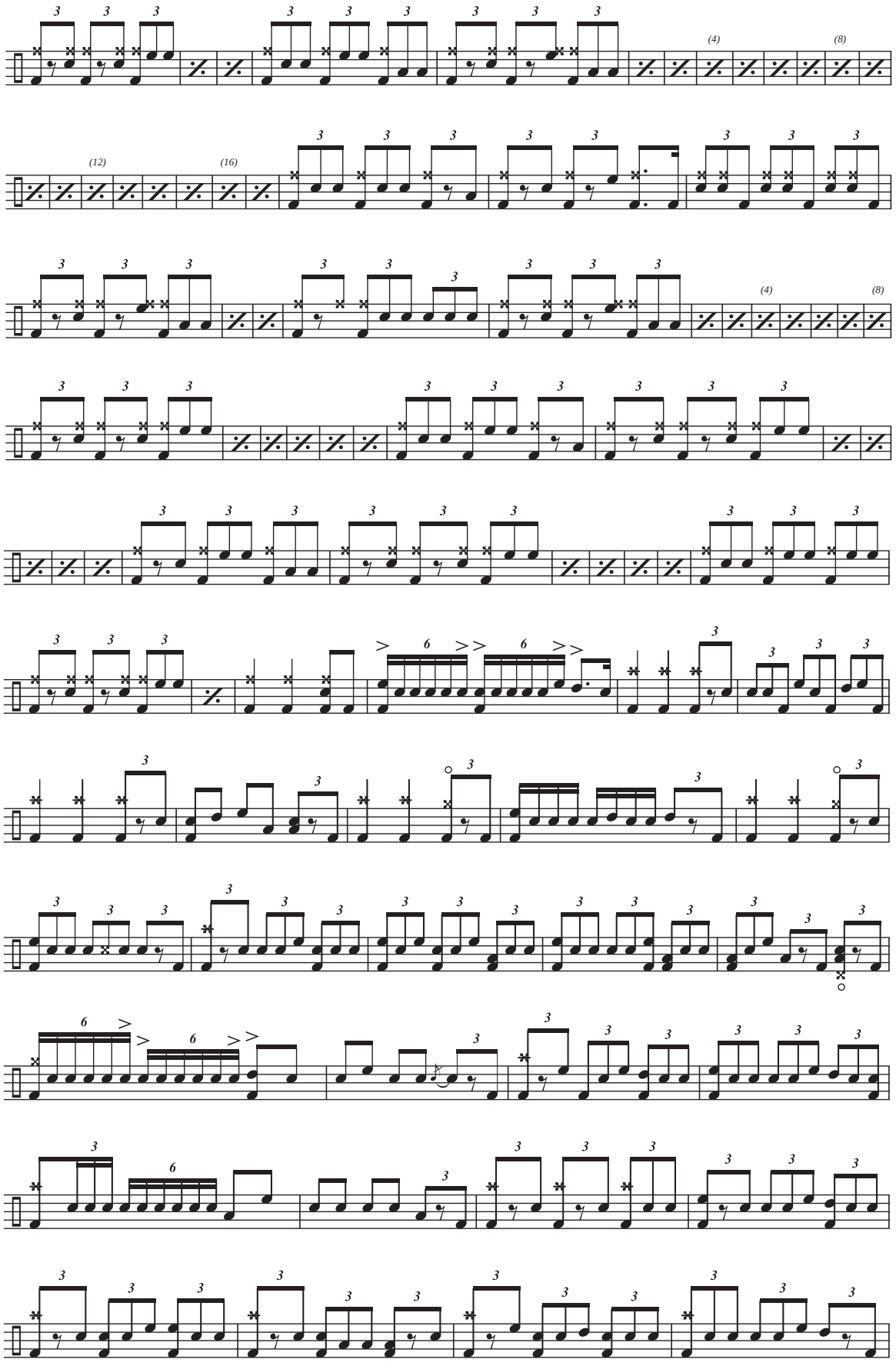
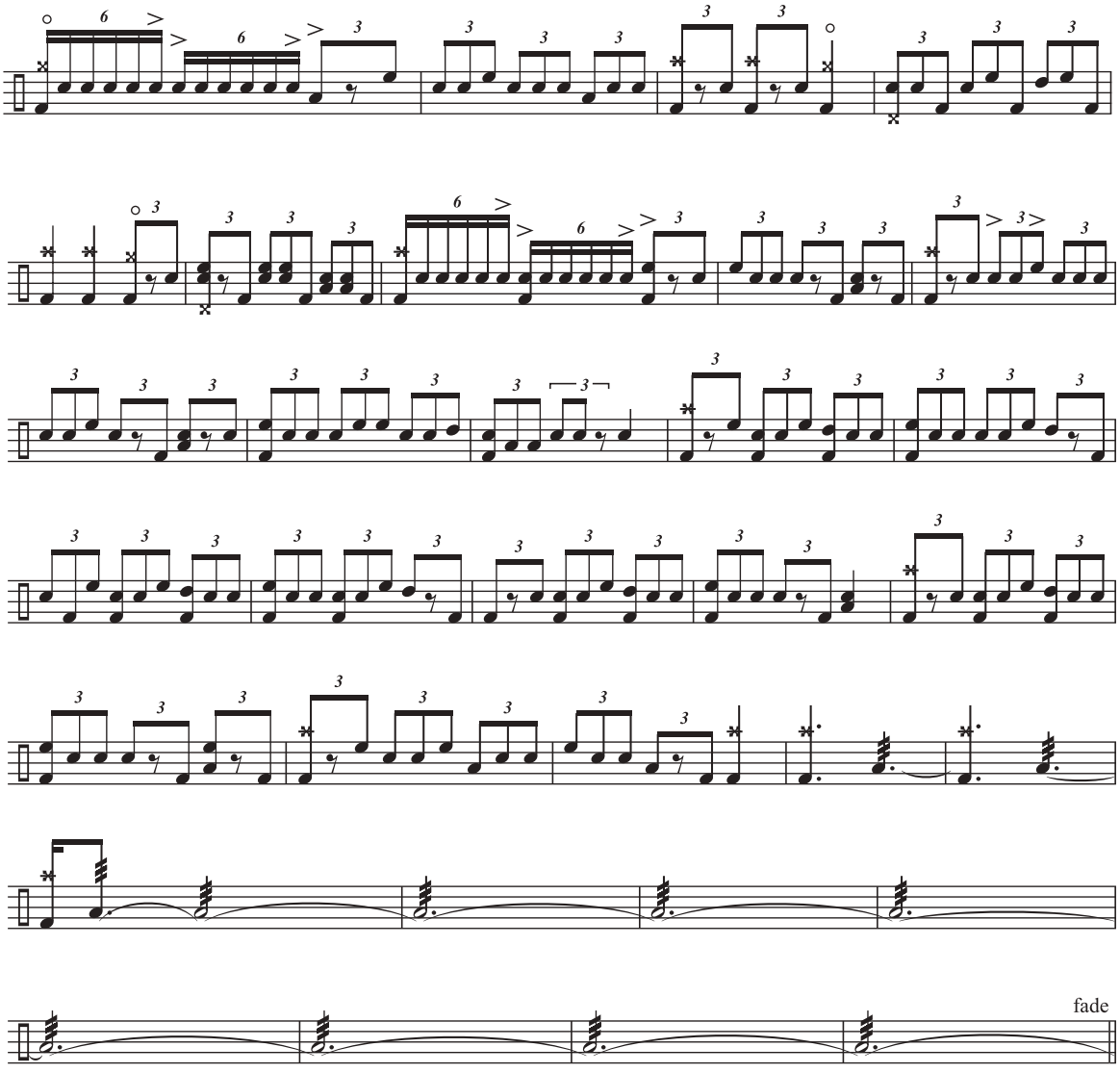
Transcribed by John Kerr

Jim Marshall



"Manic Depression" is a well-known song from The Jimi Hendrix Experience's 1967 debut album, Are You Experienced. The tune is often referred to as a "psychedelic waltz" due to its heavy 3/4 swing feel. Drummer Mitch Mitchell, like many of his drum contemporaries, was strongly influenced by jazz, so it comes as no surprise that he can handle the groove so deftly.

Mitchell rips through the opening with a single-stroke riff that reappears throughout the piece. The main groove is a swing shuffle rhythm on the ride, with the bell emphasizing the downbeats on beats 2 and 3.

The verses of this song are comprised of three phrases, in seven-, seven-, and six-measure lengths. The turnarounds are a call & response between the guitar and the drums. In the third turnaround, the guitar and bass play a vamp while Mitch executes one of his magic drum fills. He's thinking in broad phrases that carry his fills over the barlines, incorporating a mix of straight and swung 8th notes, broken-triplet phrasings, and 16th notes. In the guitar solo, Mitch changes the left-hand part slightly. Throughout the track, Mitchell maintains a strong quarter-note pulse in the bass drum.

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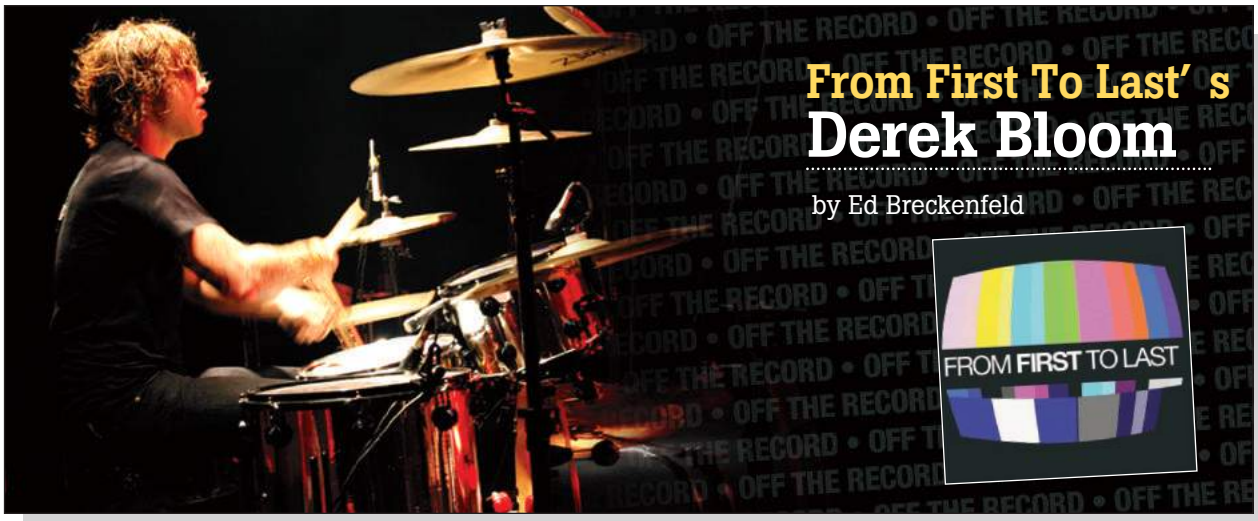
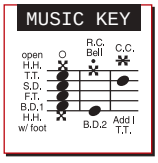


From First To Last's Derek Bloom

by Ed Breckenfeld

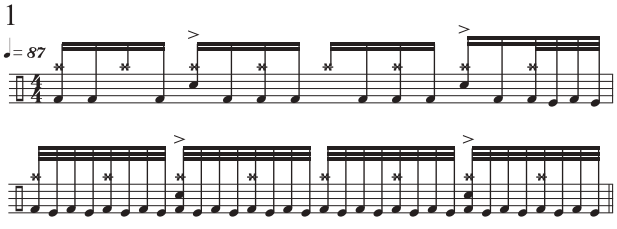


The road to success for From First To Last has taken several twists and turns, including record label changes and multiple shifts in personnel. One constant since the band's first full-length album has been the explosive drumming of Derek Bloom. On the latest, self-titled release from this quartet, Bloom's playing is featured prominently in the mix, making this one pop/metal album where impressive drum patterns play as big a role as heavy guitar work. Here are some key examples.

"Two As One"

The instrumental interlude in the middle of the album's first song gives Derek an opportunity to showcase his speedy 32nd-note double-kick chops. (2:20)

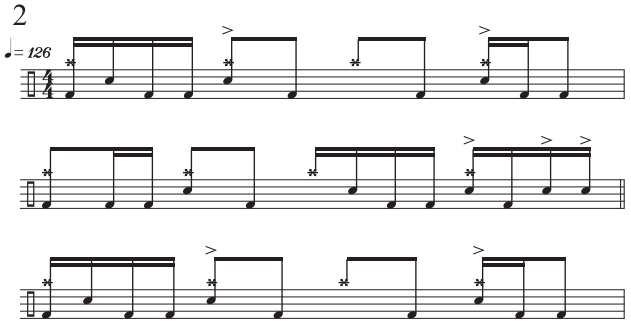
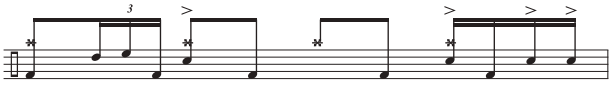
1



"The Other Side"

This track comes slamming right out of the box with a syncopated opening groove. Notice the paradiddle rhythm extending from the end of measure 2 through the beginning of measure 3. (0:00)

2



Later in the song, Bloom pumps up the energy with a reversed thrash groove, followed by a great triplet fill that leads to the outro. (3:20)

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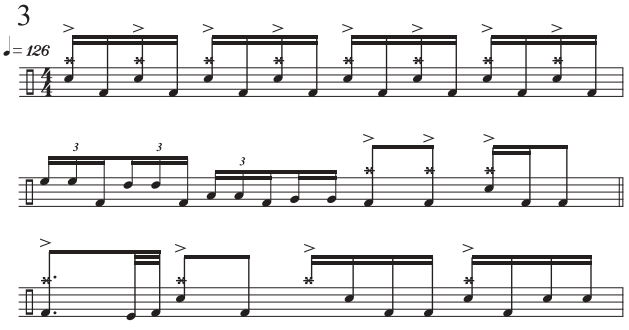
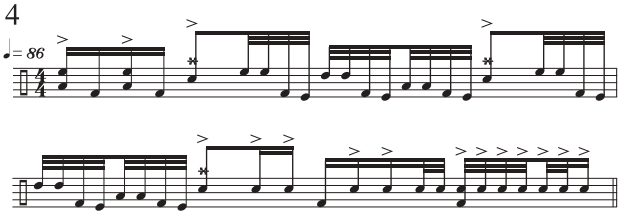

"World Away"

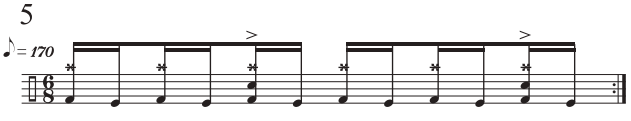
Derek's intense groove for this tune's second verse is one of the album's highlights. An opening tom figure, two sets of sweeping quads, and an extended snare flourish add up to an impressive and attention-grabbing pattern. (1:35)

4

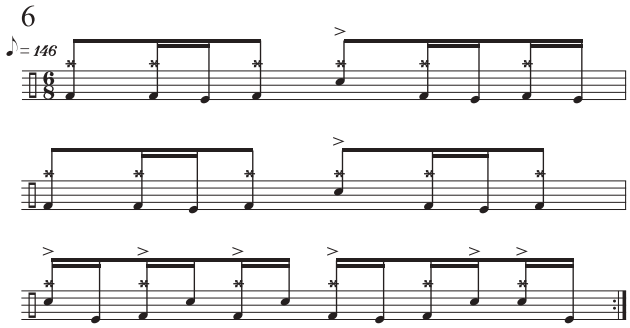


"We All Turn Back To Dust"

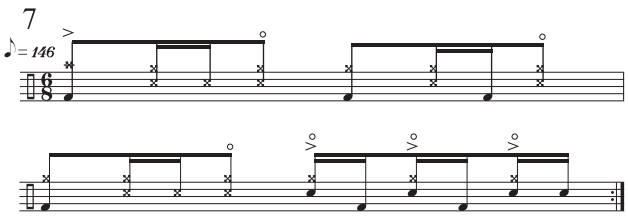
This track is driven by Bloom's relentless double bass groove, with the snare pattern acting as a backbeat in 6/8 time. (1:17)

5

"Medicinal Reality"

Here's a heavy intro beat with a half-time feel in 6/8, powered by a broken-up bass drum pattern. The third measure contains an unusual and compelling rhythmic variation between the kick and snare. (0:10)

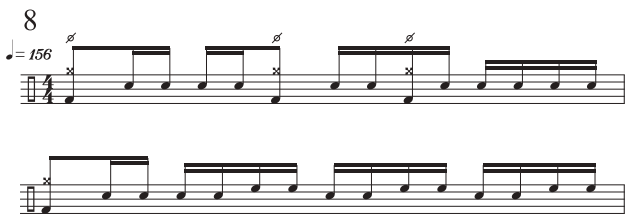


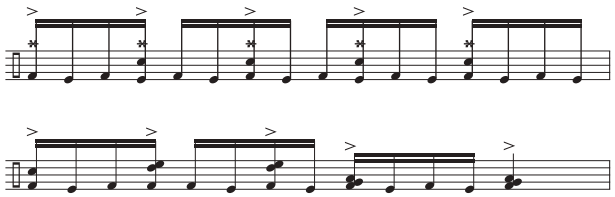
Derek's groove for the verse is as cool as his intro pattern, with multiple cross-sticks and open hi-hat accents playing a major roll. (0:25)



"A Perfect Mess"

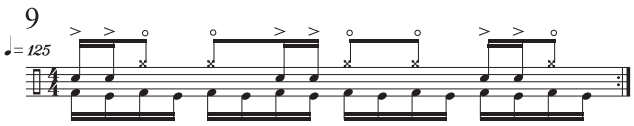
Bloom's four-bar drum solo before the second verse of this tune contains a few rhythmic themes. The hi-hat accents in the first measure are echoed by the toms in measure 2, and the snare/crash rhythm in the third measure moves to the toms in bar 4. (1:01)



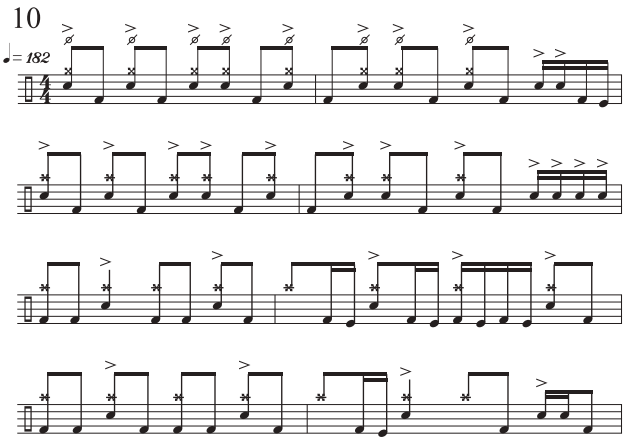


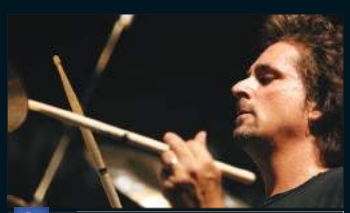
"Tick Tick Tomorrow"

Here's a beat with an interesting snare/hi-hat tradeoff over a steady 16th-note double-kick pattern. (0:01)



"I Once Was Lost, But Now, Am Profound"

Derek accelerates this song's energy with a fast groove. He builds the sequence by moving his syncopated accents from hi-hat to crash, and then follows with some interesting double bass work. (0:01)

You can contact **Ed Breckenfeld** through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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Building Precision, Accuracy, And Groove

by David Garibaldi

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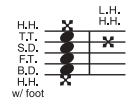


When I first began listening to drumming, I was always attracted to the groove. I loved the beats I was hearing. As my ears developed, I discovered that I also preferred drumming that was precise and accurate. When I think of precision and accuracy, I think of a finely crafted watch—one that is distinctive, has timeless style, keeps excellent time, and represents the highest quality. When I think of groove, I think of steadiness. No matter how simple or complex, the groove must serve the song.

While I like drumming that's precise and accurate, I also like drumming that has a deep feel. When I think of those qualities in a musical context, I think of beautifully crafted grooves or ideas that navigate effortlessly through songs and that add style to a performance. To me, these traits represent the highest and finest standard.

Study Your Favorites

My favorite drummers have always had these qualities, as they are the embodiment of precision, accuracy, and groove. They sound as good to me today as they did twenty years ago.

Studying your favorite drummers can help create your own personal curriculum. Learn everything about them, and then shape what you discover into something that's your own.

Many years ago, I did this with Bernard Purdie. I learned a great deal from listening to his recordings and seeing him in action. His unique approach is timeless. Check him out on Steely Dan's DVD The Making Of Aja.

Somewhere Between 4/4 And 6/8

The linear drumming concept requires great precision and accuracy. Every note must be in its proper place. Instead of playing them as straight 16th notes, I like to add a slight swing when playing these kinds of grooves, not far from the mid-point between 4/4 and 6/8.

New Orleans great Stanton Moore teaches a simple but very effective drumset exercise to achieve this relaxed feel. (I'm sure he won't mind if I share it with you!)

1) Set your metronome to 80 beats per minute.

2) Play 16th notes on the snare drum and quarter notes with both feet. Begin with the right hand.

3) Continue alternating 16ths while gradually moving the left hand toward a triplet (swing) feel.

4) Eventually your hands will move closer together until you're playing flams, and then unisons with both hands playing 8th notes.

5) After you reach unisons, start moving the left hand back the other way until you return to straight 16ths.

This exercise teaches you how to relax—or as Stanton calls it, "morph"—16ths into triplets, then flams, then unison, and then back to straight 16ths.

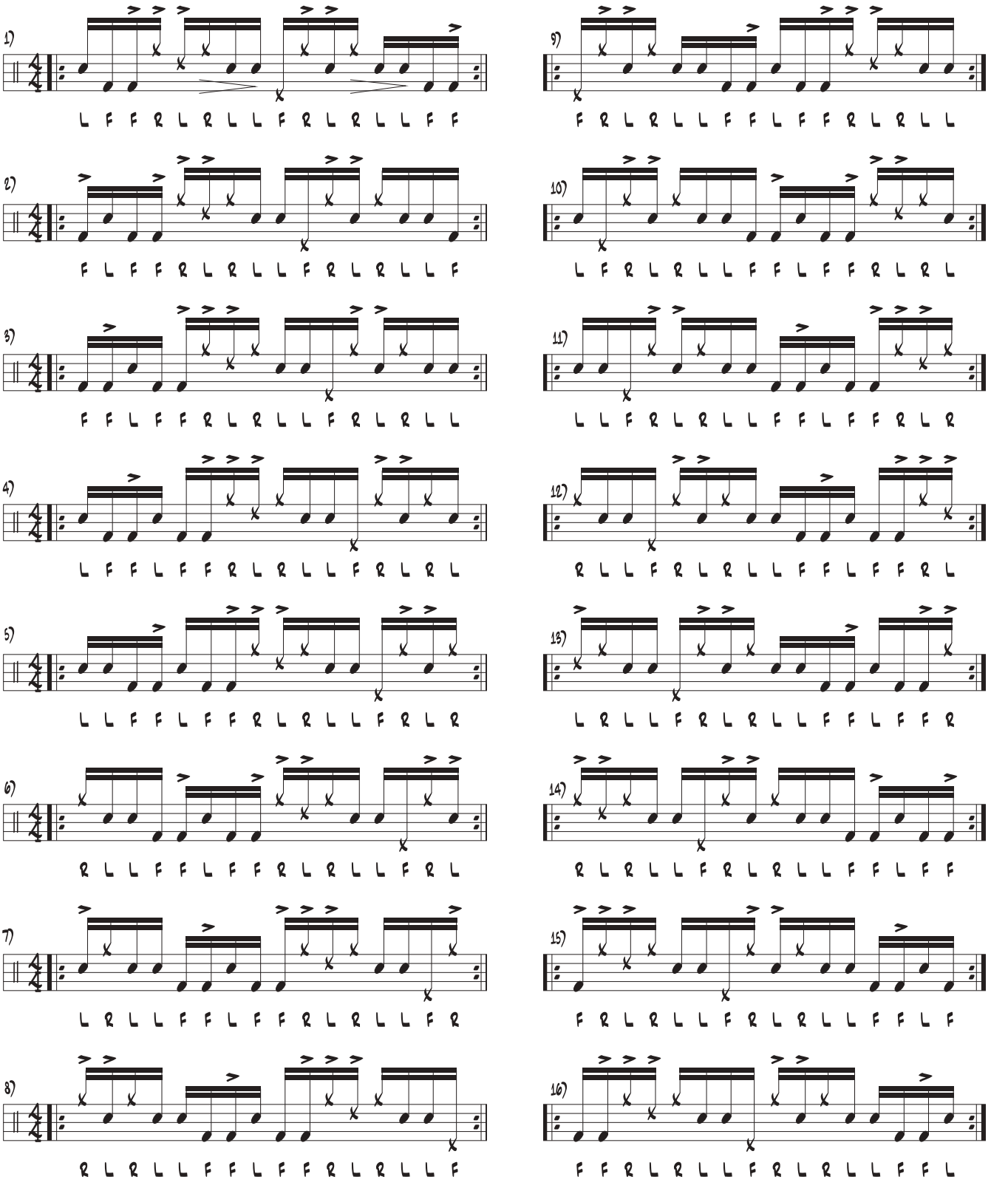
All African-based music has this feel. Percussionist Michael Spiro calls the mid-point between 4/4 and 6/8 "fix." It's neither 4 nor 6. The musical context you're in will determine how much of that "grease" to apply.

Repetition is the key element in adding these characteristics into our playing.

Put It To Work

The dual hi-hat four-limb groove shown in Example 1 on the following page is the basic idea for this month's permutation study. (You can play the right hand hi-hat part on a ride cymbal bell if you don't have a second hi-hat on your kit.) Notice the two decrescendo marks under the hand sticking. Use the two-sound level concept, and exaggerate these dynamic markings so that the two ghosted notes in each phrase taper off to almost nothing. Once you're able to play this basic groove comfortably, begin working through the permutations. And please keep in mind the groove tips mentioned earlier. Enjoy!

♩ = 90 - 106


1) L F F R L R L L F R L R L L F F
2) F L F F R L R L L F R L R L L F
3) F F L F F R L R L L F R L R L L
4) L F F L F F R L R L L F R L R L
5) L L F F L F F R L R L L F R L R
6) R L L F F L F F R L R L L F R L
7) L R L L F F L F F R L R L L F R
8) R L R L L F F L F F R L R L L F
9) F R L R L L F F L F F R L R L L
10) L F R L R L L F F L F F R L R L
11) L L F R L R L L F F L F F R L R
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13) L R L L F R L R L L F F L F F R
14) R L R L L F R L R L L F F L F F
15) F R L R L L F R L R L L F F L F
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Independence For The Modern Drummer

Lesson 2: The Low-End Rumble

by Steve Hass

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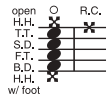
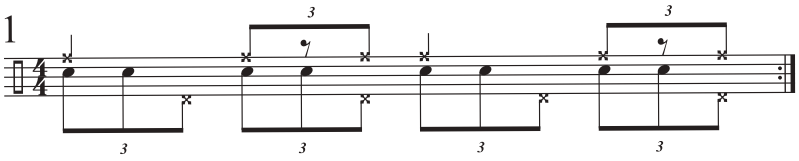


In one of my previous columns ("Not Just 2 And 4 Anymore," May 2007), we worked on alternative ideas for the hi-hat, both as a means of keeping time and as a soloing device. This time, let's take it one step further.

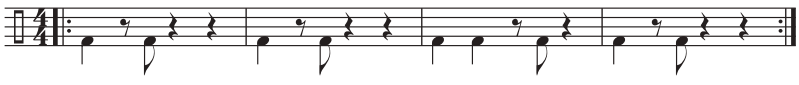
The ostinato concept we'll be using came to me on a jazz gig while trading sixteen-bar solos. On the first eight bars of my trade, I played the following typical modern jazz phrase.

Listen

1



While playing this, I began hearing some low-end rhythms underneath the pattern. I experimented by playing various rhythms in the bass drum, and it felt great! During my practice session the next day I worked on developing this concept further. Here are some of the examples I came up with:

2

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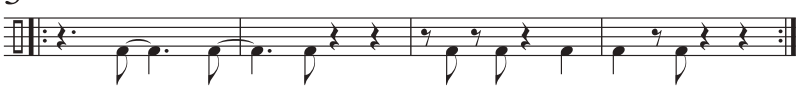
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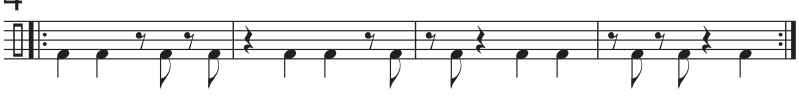
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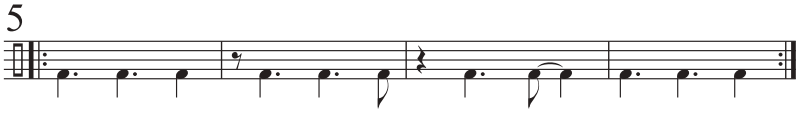
I've kept the examples on the simple side. These are just a starting point. Once you get the hang of them, I want you to be yourself and develop your own musical ideas.

At some point, you might hit a wall when it comes to finding new rhythmic ideas for the bass drum. Instead of going to books like Syncopation for extra ideas, try using the melodic rhythm of a jazz standard. This is a great way to learn the most common rhythmic motifs in jazz, while also challenging your independence on the drumkit. For a real test, try playing the melody from Thelonious Monk's blues tune "Straight No Chaser" while using the ostinato pattern above. Keep me posted on your progress!

Steve Hass is a versatile drummer who's toured and/or recorded with John Scofield, Ravi Coltrane, Manhattan Transfer, Suzanne Vega, and many others. His debut solo CD *Traveler* is available through his Web site, www.stevehass.net.

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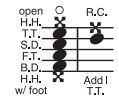
Beyond The Blushda

Expanding Tony's Famous Lick

by Terry Branam

MUSIC KEY



If there's a drum lick to get hip to, it's the blushda. Originally made famous by jazz legend Tony Williams, many drummers have put their own spin on this cool sticking pattern. In this article I will explain the blushda and show you how to make it your own with some phrasing and orchestration ideas.

Meet The Blushda

In its most basic form, the blushda is a left-hand flam drag with accents on the first and third triplet partials. The most common orchestration of this figure is to place the grace note on a tom, followed by a strong snare accent.

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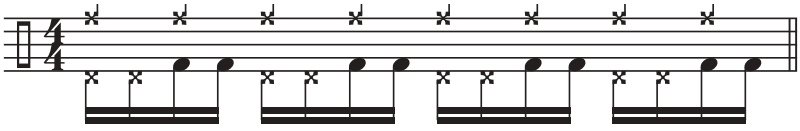
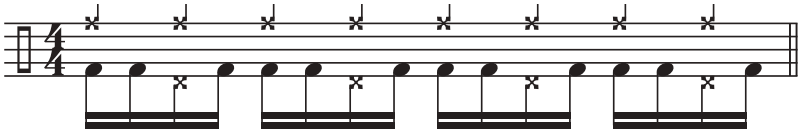
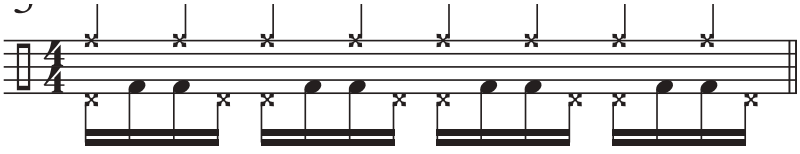


Here are some other ways to orchestrate it on the drumset. Try leading with the opposite hand.





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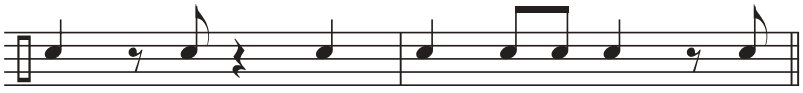
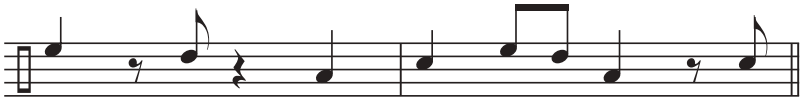
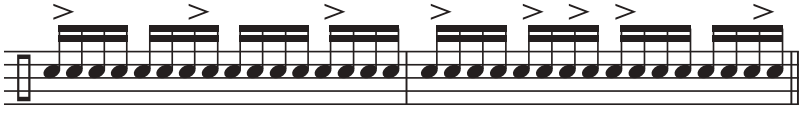
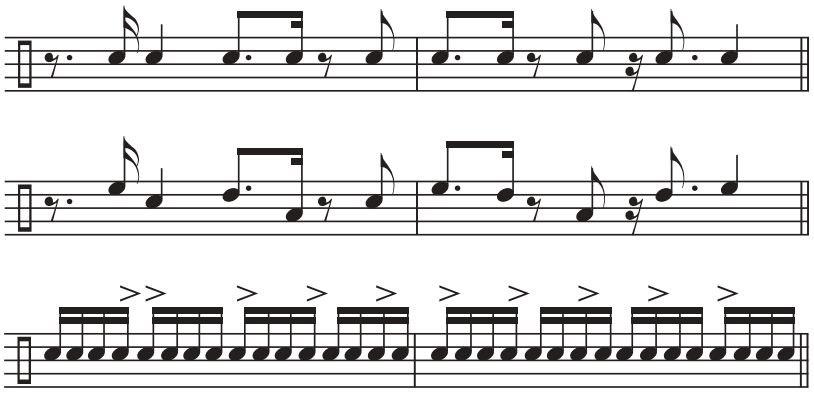
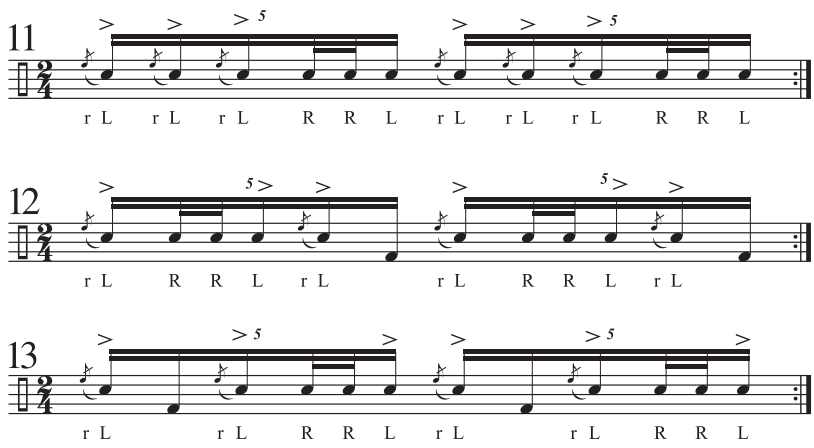
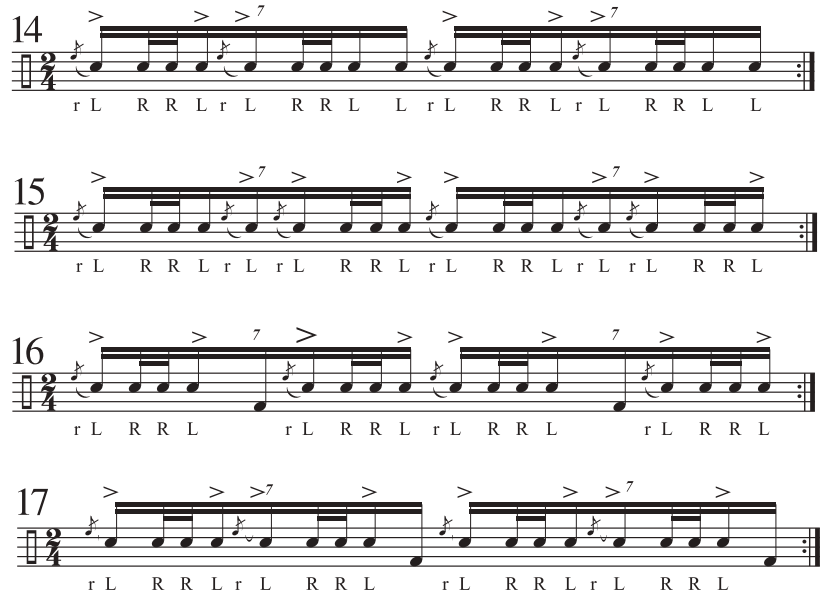

Group It Up

Notes can be added before and after the blushda to create different note groupings. Here are a few ways to play groups of four.



Here are some five-note groupings.

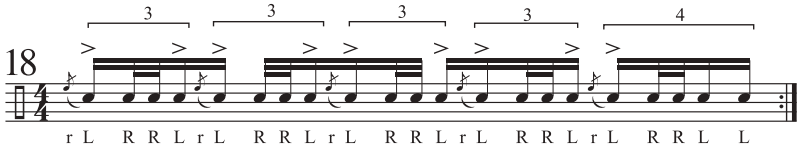
8)	R	L	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	R	L
9)	R	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	L	R	L
10)	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L
11)	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R	R	L	R	L	L	R	L	R



To create groups of seven, you can combine the threes and fours from the previous examples.

As you can see, these figures offer a lot of phrasing possibilities. In order to make a bar of 16th notes in 4/4, we have to apply a little math to make the numbers add up.

BEYOND THE BLUSHDA

Here' s a commonly used phrase: 3-3-3-3-4.

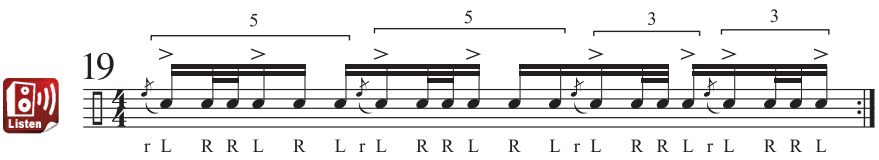


Enter The Matrix

Now try moving the four grouping of the previous example to different parts of the phrase. Here' s a matrix of the possible combinations:

3-3-3-4-3 , 3-3-4-3-3, 3-4-3-3-3, 4-3-3-3-3

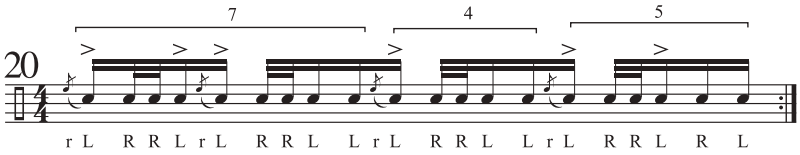
Now let' s mix the fives with the threes to create unusual-sounding phrases.



Here are ways to reorganize the previous example.

5-3-3-5, 3-3-5-5, 3-5-3-5, 5-3-5-3

Finally, let' s use groupings of seven, four, and five to change things up even further.



Now try these permutations.

7-5-4, 4-5-7, 4-7-5, 5-7-4, 5-4-7

We' ve only scratched the surface with these examples. Remember to experiment with orchestration and sticking, as well as different subdivisions—such as triplets. Have fun, and good luck!

Terry Branam is a freelance drummer, private teacher, and clinician in the Chicago area. He can be contacted at terrybranam@gmail.com.

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Jack DeJohnette

The Jazz Giant Shares His Listening Habits

by Mark Griffith

Paul La Raia

Some musicians never listen to the style of music they're currently playing. On the other hand, there are some drummers who are so totally obsessed by their instrument that their listening habits usually revolve around drum-oriented recordings. Some musicians never listen to themselves on record, while others seem to listen to themselves a little too much.

There is no "right or wrong" concerning a musician's listening habits. But it's always fascinating to find out what the greats are listening to. Even the most stoic of artists seem to open up when you ask them what they've been listening to lately. So why not base a column around that very question? With that in mind, the great Jack DeJohnette seemed to be a perfect choice to kick off this new MD column, Playlist.

A Lifetime Of Eclecticism

Jack DeJohnette's own recordings have always been the definition of "eclectic." He's recorded solo drumming records (Pictures), jazz recordings that incorporate Native American music (Music For The Fifth World), avant-garde and free jazz, and a recording that includes sequencers and synthesizers (Parallel Realities). He even released a recording on which he didn't play drums at all (The Jack DeJohnette Piano Album, with drummer Freddie Waits). This all-inclusive palette could really get you wondering what Jack listens to in his leisure time.

To further pique your interest, Jack's most recent collaborations with Gambian kora master Foday Musa Suso are truly unclassifiable. His new band Ripple Effect takes Jack's musical palette even one step further by combining Brazilian vocalist Marlui Miranda, bassist Jerome Harris, and saxophonist John Surman with a decidedly electronica approach (courtesy of Surman's son Ben). And for those who are surprised by the inclusion of this new "techno influence" into Jack's ever widening sonic world, you just haven't been paying attention.

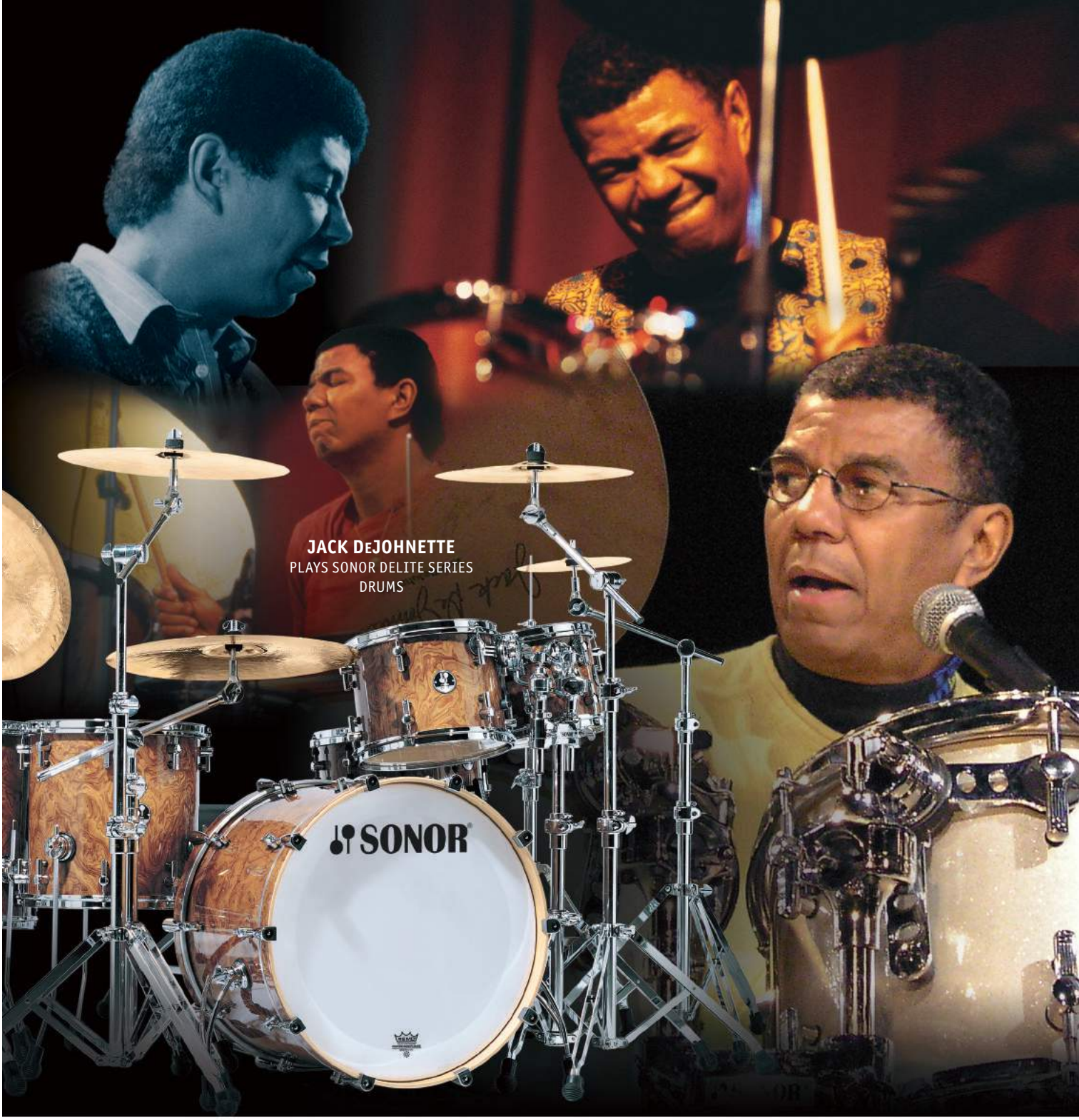
When Jack DeJohnette and Bill Frisell recorded The Elephant Sleeps But Still Remembers, they wove a truly unique musical tapestry. This particular recording walks the line between often "violent" sounding modern avant-garde jazz, new age relaxation, and drum 'n' bass funk. Jack feels so strongly about this new combination of ingredients that Ripple Effect has adopted this same recipe, resulting in their new record, Hybrid.

This electronica influence has also manifested itself in the

> **"All of the sounds that I hear in nature, or in any other people's music, come out in my musical expression on the drumset."**

omnipresence of the Korg Handsonic HPD-15 percussion module/drum that is always close to Jack's side when he plays live these days. When I sat down with him he was in the middle of a tour with Chick Corea and Bobby McFerrin. This is an intuitive trio of multi-instrumentalists, with Jack splitting his time between the drums, wave drum, melodica, and even a little bit of piano.

The first part of our interview was spent with Chick and Jack asking each other about their chosen instruments. The greats are always learning: Jack was asking Chick about specific piano fingerings, and Chick was asking Jack about the various "shapes" that he uses to move around the drumset, likening



Jack DeJohnette
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them to the shapes of the scales on the keyboard. After their "lessons" subsided, Jack and I snuck off to a dressing room to talk. Upon asking him what was in his iPod, he was quick to scroll through his own personal playlist and talk about his favorite music.

MD: What have you been listening to lately?
Jack: I've been listening to some African tribal music by Sonar Sengour. The recording is called Lost Africa, and the tune that I've really been into is called "Sicco." It's mostly vocal chants, with percussion instruments accompanying. I like the "organic-ness" of this music. It's village music that has a great sense of soul and spirit.

I hear the same musical components when I listen to the vocal music of South Africa. Those people's voices are strong, and their spirit is even stronger. The combination of the male, female, and children's voices convey a real sense of triumph and unity that I enjoy and admire.

I've also been listening to music from a collection called African Voices: Songs Of Life. It has performers like Ayub Ogada, Samite, and Vieux Diop on it. I see all of this music as just a landing port for your soul, a place to take a rest. This is music that isn't trying to be anything, it just is.
MD: What a beautiful way of saying it, "music that just is."

Paul La Raia

Jack: You know what you should check out? There's a record that Youssou N'Dour did called Egypt. He's singing with an Egyptian orchestra and his band. They're singing Egyptian music, and it's great. I love his voice. I also enjoy listening to a singer from Cape Verde named Cesaria Evora.

I have to mention that I love the recording that George Harrison produced a while back called Chants Of India. That's a very special recording to me. It's sixteen ragas that he and Ravi Shankar put together. It's a really relaxing and peaceful thing to listen to, which is an important thing to consider in these times we're living in.

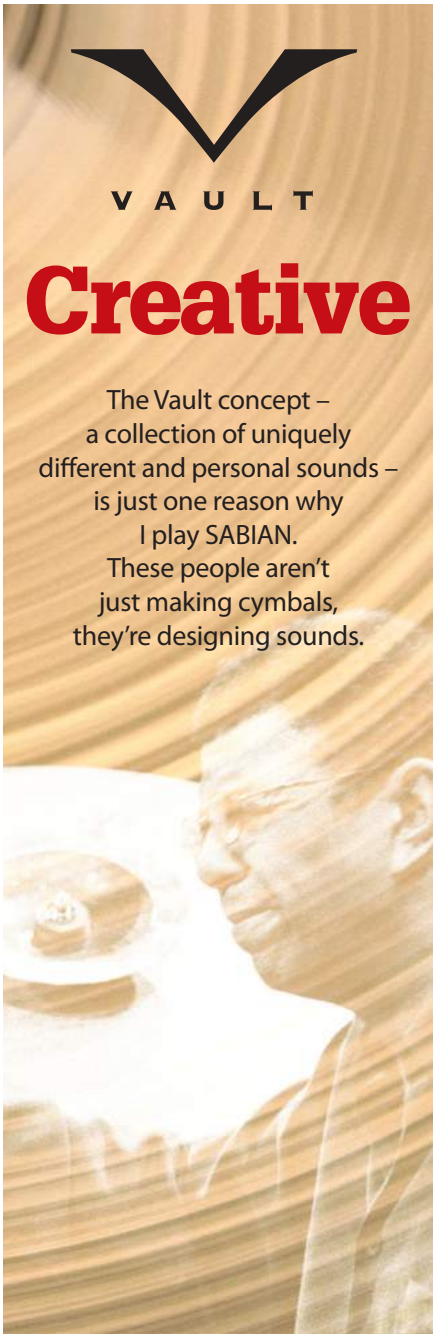
I'm always listening to Ahmad Jamal's At The Pershing. I love Ahmad's trio with Vernell Fournier. He's one of my favorite drummers. I listen to Miles' Birth Of The Cool and John Coltrane's Blue Trane a whole lot—that's just classic music. I like all of the Clifford Brown and Max Roach recordings, and I like Dexter Gordon too. And I'm always listening to Charlie Parker; most recently, it's been some of the unreleased stuff that Bird did on Verve. And I really like Django Reinhardt.
MD: What is it about Django that you like?
Jack: He had a way of giving the guitar that sense of gypsy soul, but he also made it warm, like a human voice. The ideas that he played on the guitar way back in the 1940s are still contemporary today, which is amazing.

The gypsy approach to music really fascinates me. It's produced some great musicians. They still celebrate the gypsy approach to jazz at a festival in France every year. It's an approach to music that's unlike any other in the world.

Give The Drummer Some

MD: I find it very revealing that you haven't named many drummers yet, except for Max Roach and Vernell Fournier. You listen to music, not the drums. There's an important

August 5th, 2008, 7:35pm. Guitar Center Sales Manager Guy Murai and Terry Bozzio trading views on time signatures, independence, tuning, and the pursuit of the ultimate kick sound.



JACK DEJOHNETTE

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lesson right there.

Jack: I listen to Coltrane's Giant Steps a lot, and I still practice along to that record. Art Taylor had a really special thing; he didn't get enough credit for what he did. He had his own style based out of Art Blakey and Philly Joe Jones.

MD: I've studied and listened to A.T.'s right hand a whole lot.

Jack: His left hand wasn't bad either. I really like A.T.'s drumming, especially on Giant Steps. I've also been listening to a record that Joe Lovano made with Paul Motian called I'm All For You. Hank Jones is on it, and it's all ballads. I like Joe Lovano, and it's a great recording.

But you mentioned drummers, and there are many young players that I enjoy hearing: Bill Stewart, Kim Thompson, Yoron Israel, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Cindy Blackman, Eric Harland, Terri Lyne Carrington, Greg Hutchinson, Kenny Washington…. These guys have all taken what they heard from people like Roy, A.T., Tony, and me and done their own thing with it. I really appreciate that.

Music That Just…Is

MD: Based on the projects that you've been doing recently, I knew that you listened to a lot of different music from around the world. But for some reason I thought you were going to mention a bunch of classical music.

Jack: I love the Bach violin concertos; I've been listening to the one in G minor a lot. And then there's a compilation called Great Pianists Of The 20th Century, which is a fantastic collection of classical piano music and pianists. I also like pianist Andre Watts.

MD: Do you listen to anything that you've played on? Some musicians never listen to themselves, while others do.

Jack: I listen to the recording that I made with Bill Evans and Eddie Gomez called At The Montreux Jazz Festival. I liked playing with Bill, and I like his music. I just did a trio record with Bruce Hornsby and Christian McBride, and I like listening to that. I also just completed a trio date with Danilo Perez and John Patitucci, so I've been listening to the rough mixes of that.

MD: How about rock music? Are you listening to any rock?

Jack: Absolutely! I love Fishbone. Have you ever heard their record The Psychotic Friends Nuttwerx? That's a recording that everyone should check out. Fishbone and Bad Brains are the forerunners to Living Colour, and they're all coming out of Jimi Hendrix. I still find it hard to believe that there are some people out here who still haven't heard Hendrix. [Bad Brains guitarist] Dr. Know lives near me in Woodstock. He's a great musician.

I'm also a big fan of The Band. They have what I mentioned before, a great sense of soul and spirit in their music. I listen to Jamaican guitarist Ernest Ranglin's In Search Of The Lost Riddim, and I really like Geoffrey Oryema's Beat The Border, which is sort of African rock music. Then there's this band called Gilfema that guitarist Lionel Loueke co-leads. They play some interesting stuff. I don't know what you'd call it, though.

Celebrating Musical Diversity

MD: You never seem to be that concerned with what approach or style of music something is.

Jack: I've always been very curious about different music. I've never tried to isolate different genres of music, and put everything in a box. That's not what music represents to me. It's a shame that we don't celebrate musical diversity. When we homogenize music, it totally dehumanizes and discredits its full potential.

For example, Carlos Santana and Alice Coltrane did a recording together called Illuminations that I listen to a lot. And another of my favorite recordings is John Coltrane's Interstellar Space, which is a duet between John and drummer Rashied Ali. Between those two recordings you can hear a great deal of musical diversity and human musical communication.

Today, people are way too busy trying to be specialists in certain things. Unfortunately this is happening in music as well. I'm consciously trying to cross the musical borders with many of my recent projects, and I guess that's reflected in the music that I listen to. I listen to whatever music that I'm feeling at the moment, and sometimes I don't even want to listen to music. Sometimes I prefer to listen to the sounds of nature, the wind, the birds. All of the sounds that I hear in nature, or in any other people's music, come out in my musical expression on the drumset.

Mark Griffith is a New York based drummer, writer, and music historian. His recording *Drumatic* is a tribute to the great drummer composers. Mark recently wrote the books that accompany Hudson Music's DVD packages: *The Art Of Playing With Brushes,* and *Steve Smith: Drum Legacy.*

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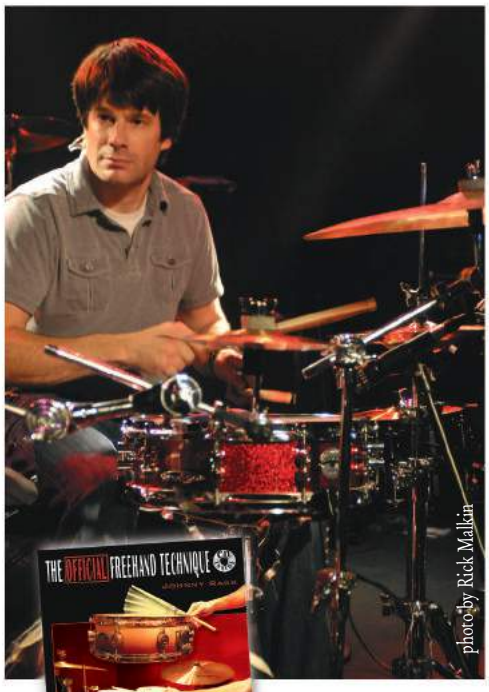
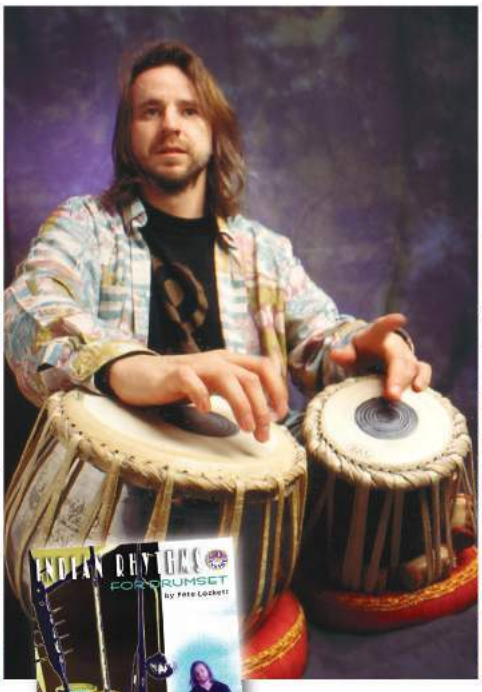
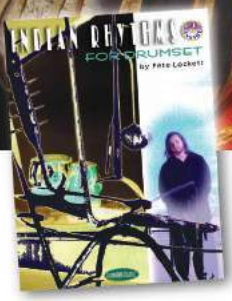




Johnny Rabb



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The Vacuum Sucks

Improving Your Communication Skills

by Billy Ward

Communication skills are crucial to great drumming, whether it's being able to follow a conductor while sight-reading a show, or nodding to the other musicians to indicate a new section or an improvised change in plans. And if you've played in bands, then you can probably think of at least one time where you could've said something better within a situation that arose.

Not only does playing in different bands offer new musical styles, it offers an opportunity to learn to communicate with different people. Some folks just don't get along (while others find instant friendship). But I suspect successful musicians are able to jump across most personal divides to make playing with them a fun experience.

Communication And Your Career

I believe having great communication skills can be the difference between a failed career and a rewarding one. It's no exaggeration to say that a pro drummer might play in five different bands within one week. His ability to succeed at this has a lot to do with his ability to communicate on and off the bandstand.

My guess is, wherever you live, there are plenty of bands: bar bands, marching bands, church bands, concert bands, jam bands, wedding bands—all situations where you can learn to improve your communication skills. I made a mistake through most of high school by playing in just one band (out of loyalty), and it was a mistake that I hope you don't make. I regret missing out on many opportunities that would have given me new experiences.

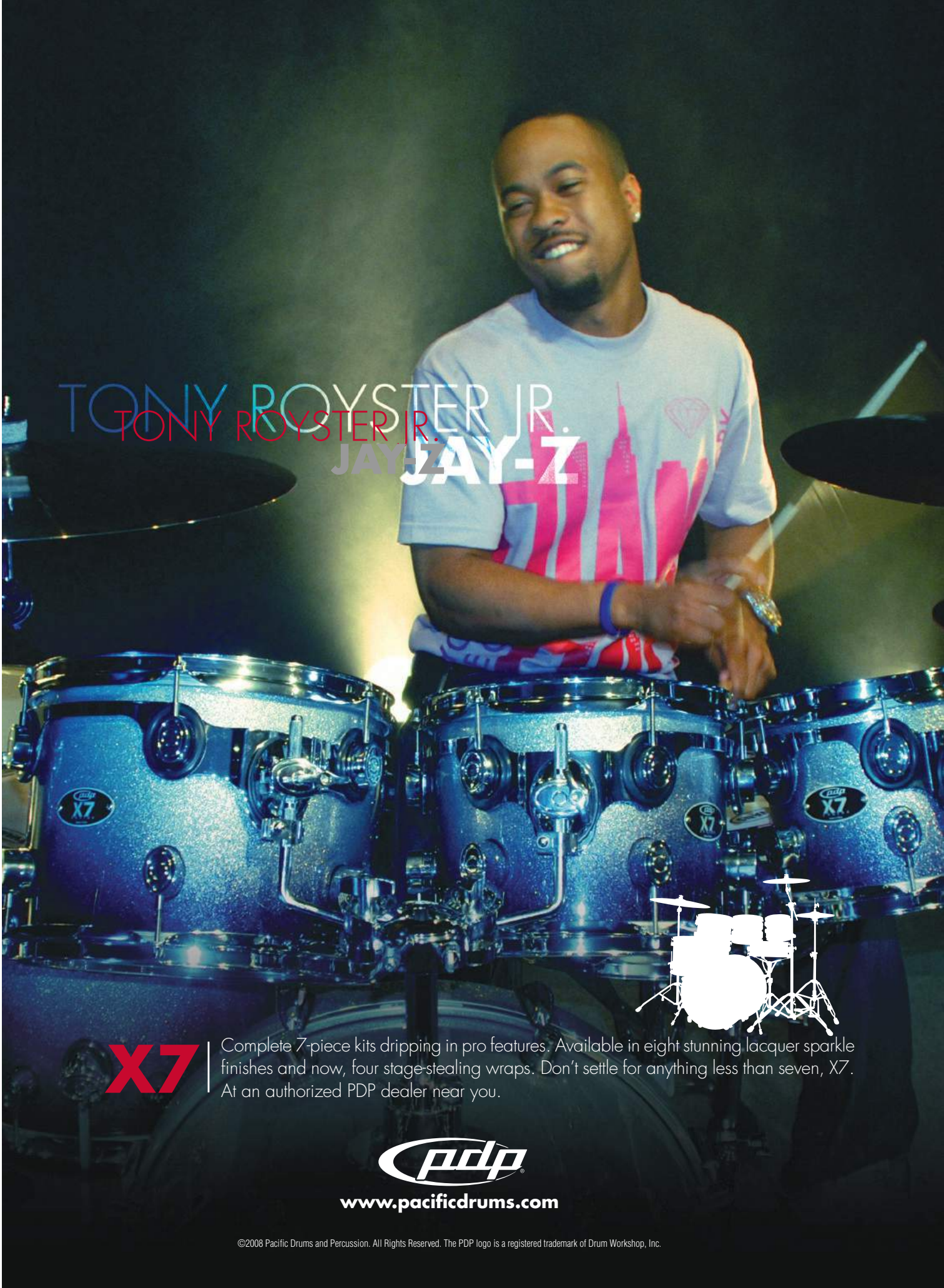
Right now I can imagine someone saying, "I'm a drumset player. What do concert bands and marching bands have to do with where I'm headed as a drummer?" As an eighth grader, I played in the YMCA National Orchestra, and we performed at the World's Fair. During a late rehearsal, just before the shows began, the conductor broke my heart and took me off snare drum (the prized glamor chair). He told me that I'd be playing concert bass drum. "Why?" I asked. "All three of you play the snare well," I clearly recall the director saying. "But you're the only one that has a lovely tone on the bass drum and can lead the time of the band without being pushy or ugly. You also follow my directing very well." This was a reinforcing lesson on the value of tone, touch, and paying attention to everything when playing, all topics that relate to what I do today as a professional musician.

In high school, marching band reinforced my love and obsession with rudiments. Hopefully it's done, or will do, the same for you. If you're lucky enough that your school has a band program (they're fading away, it seems), join the marching band! Marching band also taught me leadership, because it provided my first opportunity to play that role. As the lead drummer, I had to learn how to direct people without being too bossy.

In Different Settings

Communication skills also pay huge dividends when you're confronted with a new experience. Pro players often end up having to walk onto a stage with total strangers and play well together. When I was with Joan Osborne, we played songs on live radio broadcasts that we never rehearsed! You simply can't do that unless you know how to communicate and you've been around the block a few times.

These challenges happen on smaller stages as well. Sometimes a wedding band is put together with people who have never played together before—and who might never work



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together again. This becomes a perfect "Petri dish" of obstacles or learning experiences for the talented drummer. The pianist might only know how to play jazz. The bassist might not be a very good player, but perhaps he has a great singing voice. The singer might have terrible pitch or time (or both!), but maybe he or she looks great. This kind of diversity is a real-life skill test for a drummer who wishes to get the people out there on the dance floor.

For a cover band playing in a bar, similar weaknesses can be overcome. Maybe the guitarist is more into Van Halen, yet you have to play some R&B tunes. Even worse, the bass player could be a musical snob who doesn't want to learn the latest Green Day hit. It's the drummer who must lead the way for these musicians to groove and sound like a band, or at least to get some people in the audience to stay and dig the set.

I've been in situations where the singer was so nervous and anxious that somebody had to step up and relieve it somehow. An appropriately timed joke or goofy moment can really make a difference in a performance.

The Alpha Dog

Dogs are always judging and re-judging who's the boss, called "the alpha dog." Who are the alpha dogs in your band? It's an odd thing, because I'm personally convinced I would be a more successful sideman if I could somehow be less "alpha." But obviously, I cannot contain my opinions to myself. (Ha!)

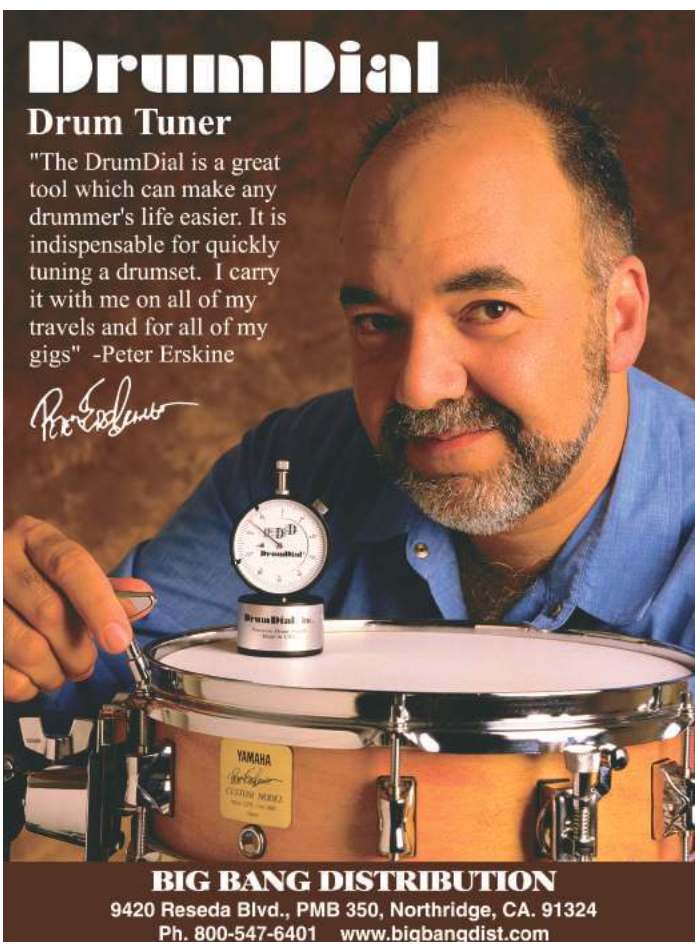
If we are playing together, I'm one of the alphas. I own the time, and sometimes I prefer to be the emperor of the groove as well. I'm not always right, of course, and fortunately I'm willing to pivot and immediately state my errors clearly. This enables me to get gigs with some people, but those people usually have strong personalities as well—like Joan Osborne.

From the drumming platform, I've signaled monitor engineers for changes in other people's monitor mix (especially Joan's, because one learns how to read people's reactions). If a really good guitarist is at the other end of the stage and he's not playing well with you, then maybe you need to signal the monitor guy to turn up your hi-hat in his mix. Then all will be well again.

I've thrown a drumstick or two in the direction (don't hit them) of a guitar tech who needed to attend to an emergency but wasn't paying attention. I've stepped up and decided when it's time to end a song—leading the band through a ritard at the end. I've told many bandmates where "1" is—just as often as I've needed to be told where it is.

I can't speak with the bassist as I play, but I can watch his body language and figure out if he's happy living with me in that

"Having great communication skills can be the difference between a failed career and a rewarding one."



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song. If you ever see me playing with any singer, you' ll see my eyes glued to them during every song. Signaling, communicating, sharing, reading bandmates' body language—these are essential skills for all musicians.

It' s About Listening

Learning how to listen is just as important as learning how to speak or give directions on the bandstand. I believe there is listening, and then there' s LISTENING. For instance, what made the drummer not go to the ride in that chorus? Would it have been better if he had? What about his essential patterns? Do they follow the structure of the song? What would you change if you were playing? Is the drummer crashing his cymbals as often as you would? What other instruments are contributing to the groove and the feel of the song?

What should you listen to? I' m always asking my friends, " What are you listening to?" Reaching out to others and communicating with them is key. This might be tough for some folks. Sometimes I hear from drummers that their city is musically dead. But sometimes you have to search out good players. Reach out!

One solution for drummers who feel isolated is to reach out within the Internet community. There are many drummer forums on the Internet. I have one on my own site; other favorites are Drummercafe.com, Drumforum.org, Drumsmith.com, Drummerworld.com, Ghostnote.net, Houseofdrumming.com, Mikedolbear.com, and Pearldrummersforum.com. These forums allow drummers to hang out together. They also allow us to act as if we' re a part of something bigger than just ourselves.

That said, as Aretha sang, " ain' t nothin' like the real thing, baby." I' ve recently started (with pro drummer Louie Appel' s help) the New York City Drum Club. Our rules? If you' re a working drummer, you' re in. No snobbery, no auditions. We get ten or more drummers together every time we meet, and it' s incredible to have a two- or three-hour lunch and discuss our varying past influences and current concerns. (Additional fun flows as we make fun of whoever isn' t there—just ducking out to the bathroom might turn the attack tide towards you!)

As far as I know, this drum club thing started in Los Angeles around the insanely talented (and loved by his peers) Mark Craney. Some people say that Mark didn' t do lunch, he invented it. No matter, I think it' s important to hang out with " PLUs" (people like us). Talk about communication skills! Start your own drum club. It will feed very important parts of yourself and increase your devotion to the instrument you love and the people who play it. Draw from all areas of your community to add new influences to your ears, and, consequently, your playing.

Nobody becomes a genius in a vacuum. Get out there and do it!

Billy Ward is an in-demand session drummer and clinician. He's worked with Carly Simon, B.B. King, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne, among many others. His book, *Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming,* is published by Modern Drummer Publications. His latest DVD is *Voices Inside My Head.* Billy can be reached through his Web site, www.billyward.com.

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Kenny Chesney's Sean Paddock

A Little Nook In Nashville

Story by Michael Dawson
Photos by Rick Malkin

Since taking over the role as musical director for award-winning country star Kenny Chesney's live band in 2000, Nashville drummer Sean Paddock spends much of his time after each tour preparing for the next one. "I start thinking about the next tour as soon as we end the current one," Sean explains. "And I'll start programming all the clicks and loops for the songs at the studio in my house."

"On 'Don't Blink,' I built the backing track using files from the recording," Paddock continues. "But for the rest of them, I made the tracks myself. I just put up a mic and recorded the parts—shakers, tambourines, etc.—into Pro Tools. I also have a Roland HandSonic, which has a lot of sounds dialed in. I've used that for timbale sounds, cowbells, hand claps, and congas."

Sean started building his home studio a couple years ago, not only to help him with pre-production for tours, but so he could also record tracks for various songwriters and producers from his home. "I needed to get with the program because I was missing the boat," the drummer explains in reference to how easy it is to set up a studio these days. "So I gutted a room in my house and created a media room and my drum studio. I got a Mac and Pro Tools, which allows me to do the e-session thing.

"I have songwriter clients and other musician friends who

GEAR BOX

Drums: Yamaha Recording Custom or Absolute birch drumkit (10", 12", 14", 16" toms, and an 18x22 kick), or assorted vintage gear
Cymbals: various Zildjians
Heads: Remo Ambassador or Emperor heads on toms (bottom tuned slightly higher), Powerstroke 3 on bass drum (folded Mexican blanket inside for muffling), coated Ambassador on snares
Mics: Audio-Technica: 4050s for percussion overdubs and as overheads, dual-element AE2500 inside kick (front of drum is covered with a packing blanket to prevent bleed from other drums and to minimize slap-back from the facing wall), ATM25 on toms, AT63HE on snare, and a 4051 on the hi-hat.

Recording: Mackie 800R eight-channel pre-amp, M-Audio 1814 interface, Lacie external hard drive, MacBook Pro laptop, Pro Tools M-Powered software

Road Rack
" This is my live rack that goes on tour with me. This is also where I do all of the editing for the live show with Kenny. It has a Mac Mini computer with Pro Tools LE and Ableton Live software, a Digidesign 002 interface, and a small MIDI keyboard."

use me for drum tracks," Paddock continues. " They need to have their songs demoed, so they' ll send me a file with scratch vocals with piano or guitar. I download it into Pro Tools and sketch out a chart of the song. After I play it down once to get used to the arrangement, then I start recording. When I' m done, I upload my tracks to an FTP site, so they can get back to the producer. So far it' s been a great way to make a little extra money."

Like many other drummers who' ve built professional studios in their homes, Sean had to plan out his construction with a little more detail than just nailing up some egg crates. " I wanted hardwood floors, so the sub-flooring is insulated," says Paddock. " There' s also insulation between the two-by-fours in the walls. Then on top of that I put a $^1/_2$" layer of homasote, which is a sound barrier material. Then there' s drywall that' s been textured."

To tune in the acoustics of the 8x15 space, Sean treated the walls with various sound panels. " I used Auralex foam panels, bass traps, and sound diffusers," Paddock points out. " And I have homemade panels on the ceiling that are made from 2" pink foam insulation covered in burlap. But I didn' t want to kill the sound too much; I wanted somewhat of a room sound."

For drums, Sean bounces back and forth between a Yamaha Recording Custom (which is set up in the photos) and an Absolute birch kit. " The Recording Customs have been working great," says Paddock. " They have a naturally ' dialed in' sound that really works. They hold their tuning, and they have a very focused tone. But if I want a more open tone, I go with the Birch Absolute, or one of my maple sets. A lot of it has to do with the session, or if one of my kits is in another studio."

On this day, Sean has a walnut Longo snare in his setup, but he' s not partial to one snare over another. " I' m kind of neurotic about that," admits the drummer. " I have a small collection of vintage snares—some old Gretsch and Ludwigs, a Slingerland Radio King from the ' 50s—and a newer black beauty and a Yamaha brass—that are all great. So my snare choice depends on what I want for a given track. If I want more of a funk sound, I might bring in something like this old wood-shelled ' 70s Gretsch and crank it up to get more of a ' pop' out of it. Or I might use the Longo; it can handle a lot of tunings. Then for a deeper sound I might use a Black Beauty or an old Supra-Phonic that' s de-tuned and gushy."

Now that much of his " downtime" between stadium tours with Chesney is spent tracking songs in his studio, what advice could Sean offer to others looking to get into session work?
" Being a session player is about listening," says Paddock. " You' ve got to trust your instincts for what the song needs, and you' ve got to keep it simple so that you can build. Don' t play the same fill going into each chorus. Build on what you played before.

" But you don' t want to think too much," Sean continues. " And you don' t want to over-produce yourself. Because I have my own studio, I could play each track over and over again until I get the ' perfect' take. But in my mind, that' s never going to happen. You have to separate yourself from it and imagine that there' s a producer or bandleader in the room saying, ' Okay, that' s going to work.' Just make sure you' re happy with it, and that way your client will be happy with it, too."

Regal Tip Celebrates Fifty Years

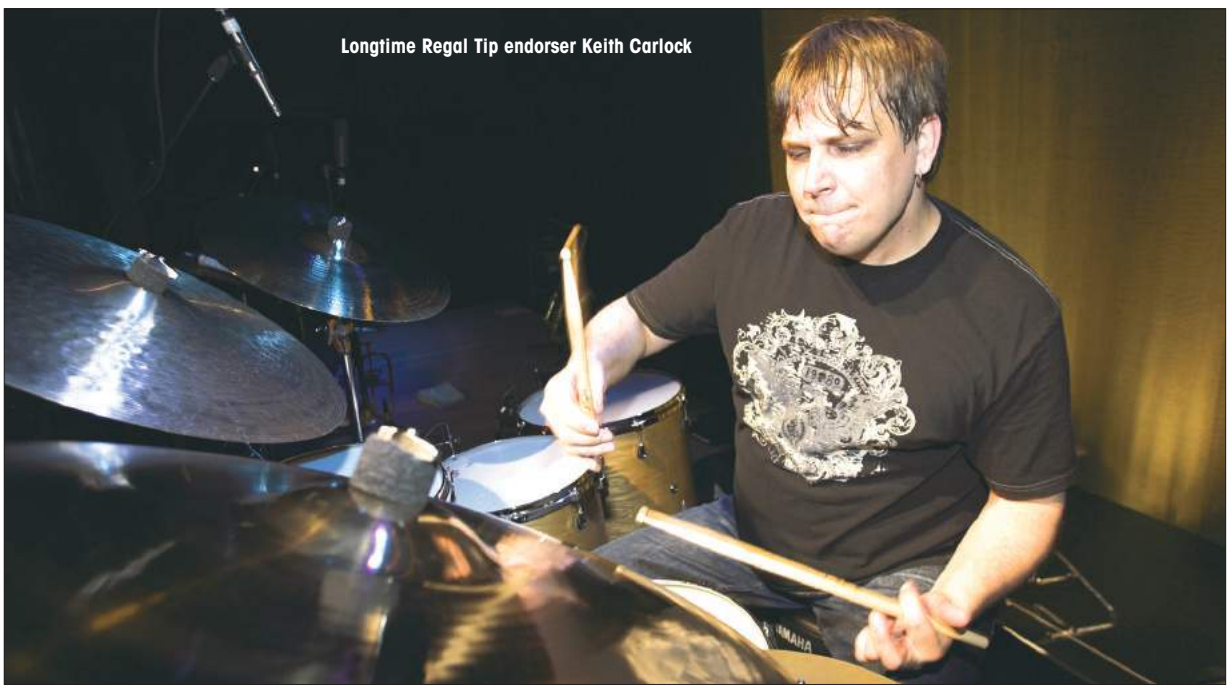
Sticking To Excellence

by T. Bruce Wittet

Clayton Cameron with his signature brushes

When his job navigating B17 bombers came to an end, Joe Calato would have welcomed an extra C-note here and there. But, as he' ll tell you time and time again, money was not the reason he got into the drumstick business. Joe had deeper concerns. For one, sticks were scarce, shoddy—just about any s-word you can imagine except "straight." Joe would dream of strolling into his next gig, his stick bag stocked with solid, tight-grained sticks that didn' t resemble bananas. And he' d imagine a pair of brushes that didn' t exist yet—brushes that would hold their fan and survive a few accents without bursting into a shower of angel-hair wires.

Calato' s stick-making activities played out in his basement for several years. In 1958 he emerged and bought a factory in his native Niagara Falls, New York, renting out one half to cover his costs. Although other companies were turning out sticks at the time, Calato had an angle that distinguished his new " Regal Tips." First a little background: World War II had nailed the coffin shut on the big band era. Smaller bands became the rage. Instead of stating the pulse with fours on the bass drum, drummers were turning to large-diameter " bop" or " bounce" cymbals on which they' d play relentless jazz rhythms. Stick tips were furring and shattering like never before. On his own gigs, Joe would dip his tips in nail polish to encourage longevity. Eventually, he began experimenting with plastic covers—little capsules cut from screwdriver handles, for example, which he' d coax over the beads of worn-out sticks. Through trial and error, he came up with a nylon tip that would stay put, outlast the body of the stick, and maintain consistent ride tone. He began advertising in the musicians' union newspaper, and drummers fell in love with Regal Tip drumsticks.


Longtime Regal Tip endorser Keith Carlock

STICKS, BRUSHES & BEYOND

STICKS

Regal Tip drumsticks are available in a wide variety of traditional models, as well as some unique variations like the popular 8A and Cross-Over. Hickory is the prime material, although Regal Tip has increased its number of maple models. Most models come in the famed Regal nylon tip.

ACCENT SERIES

Three special models serve those who define time using the ride cymbal. Tip shapes and throats vary to produce radically different sounds within a single cymbal.

E-SERIES

Specially scored nylon tips reduce high frequencies and simulate the attack of wood tips—while affording nylon durability. Now available in narrow and wide throats.

X-SERIES

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Q-SERIES

Solid sticks with rounded tips for plundering attack and punch. Each comes in wood or matching nylon tips.

PERFORMER

Take a bow, Regal endorsers, you designed these. Joey Waronker's dwarfs Jake Hanna's, Bob Gatzen's has a unique tip, and Daniel Adair's is stadium-practical. Chester Thompson's has a long reach, Jeff Hamilton's is shorter. Curt Bisquera's is sensibly solid, while Rene Creemers' is fat in hand—but it's maple, which lightens Rene's load.

BRUSHES

They range from the light strands of the Classic to the heavier gauge wires preferred by Jeff Hamilton; from the Thigpen wood/rubber handle to the quick draw of the Aluminum shaft. Woodshaft Ultra Flex have extra-long plastic strands (which can be easily cut to taste).

A subset is the thicker plastic-strand Blasticks, the originals, and the hybrids it spawned.

LATIN/WORLD

This series ranges from combination wood/nylon tips at one end to felt at the other and progresses through bundled dowels through specialty models such as the Changuito two-butt timbale stick. Also included: the sophisticated, well-balanced John Beck multi-percussion, multi-purpose mallets and keyboard mallets.

CONCERT

The revered Saul Goodman mallets reside here, as do the Staccato and Cartwheel. Mallets are very serious concerns at Regal Tip.

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REGAL TIP @ 50

Joe Calato, now in his eighties, still thinks like a drummer. He even gigs occasionally. And just as he did decades ago, he imagines ways to refine existing Regal Tip stick models, nylon or wood tip, and creates brand-new tools for his peers. Although he' s retired from the day-to-day administration of Regal Tip, he' s still at it full-time. Typically, he' ll get an idea up to spec in his home workshop—the inventive E-Series tip is a good example—before introducing it to the factory folks.

Meanwhile, Joe stays vigilant to ensure that all of his striking implements keep up with expanding musical requirements. In a minute, Joe will remind you that he' s not doing this to make a lot of dough. The words " mass production" provoke attacks of indigestion. No question, Joe Calato opened doors in 1958 for one reason—to serve drummers' needs.

Five decades later he' s got ample reasons to celebrate. How about the instantly recognizable Regal Tip drumstick with its silky slick lacquer, which gets tackier as the hands get hot? Or what about the classic brush that feels better than any other simply because the handles are made of real gum rubber? Or the Blastick, which offers rock drummers a hybrid brush they can live with—and a hell of a fat backbeat, to boot!

MD visited Regal Tip, formally J.D. Calato Manufacturing Inc., at its home in Niagara Falls. We joined in celebrations and toured the same red brick building that Joe' s inhabited since day one. We noted that while the town has been hit hard by recessions, Regal Tip has prospered. It has something to do with devotion to drummers' needs, regardless of the music they play.

Frankly, we wondered if, in the glory years of big band great Jake Hanna, Joe ever dreamed that his massive Metal X sticks (recently tweaked) would be flying out the door. Or that he' d be swamped with demands for the Alex Van Halen Limited-Edition Signature stick, the Daniel Adair PFDA, or the lanky Chester Thompson Performer Series model that has a throw like a bullwhip.

For Joe, his personal tastes in sticks and music don' t get in the way of his mission. Okay, so he does find his Quantum sticks a little throaty, but then players told him they needed the extra girth to cut through Marshall stacks. And just maybe Joe finds that the heavier-gauge wires on the Jeff Hamilton Performer Series brush are overkill. Joe knows well, however, that those wires are essential ingredients of a recipe that gets Jeff' s music cooking. It all comes down, literally, to different strokes—very much Joe' s m.o. and driving force.

We Are Family

At Regal Tip, " family" is more than a word. Of the forty-some employees on the payroll, over ten have blood ties. Another ten, by virtue of friendships and long tenures, are indicated as " like family" on a list given to MD.

It all came together when we pulled up to the factory entrance. There we were greeted by Joe' s daughters, Cathy and Carol, president and vice-president, respectively. Both women are friendly, not prone to ostentation, and they frequently back each other up during conversations.

At Regal Tip, family begins with Katherine " Kay" Calato, Joe' s wife. She' s kept her husband on the straight and narrow for many years, even those preceding corporate inception. In the early days banks shook their heads, but Kay' s fervor drove Joe.

The Calato Family. Back row: Michelle, Carol, Cathy. Front row: Katherine, Joe.

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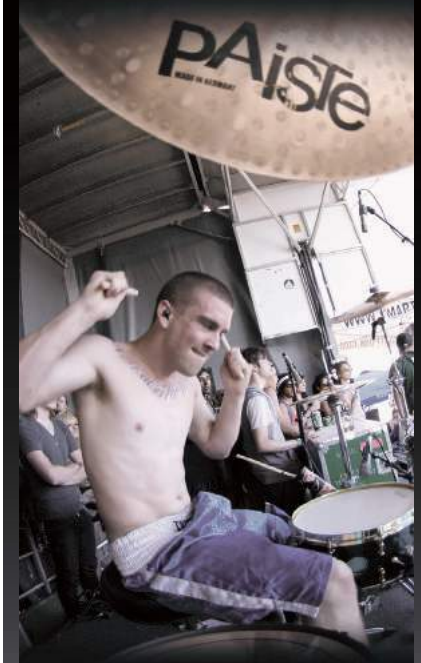

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REGAL TIP @ 50

When you talk Regal flag bearers, say Billy Martin, Rick Marotta, Joey Waronker, JR Robinson, Randy Cooke, and Curt Bisquera, you ought to be adding Katherine Calato. Regal Tip owes its survival to her.

When you' re dealing with family, and when labor legislation is silent, you don' t have to force them into retirement. Over half of the workforce has upwards of twenty years' tenure. This was especially obvious as we began our tour. Our hosts, Joe, Carol, and Cathy, introduced us to several employees, then led us through a doorway, where we paused in astonishment. Before us was an elaborate workstation run expertly by a woman who might easily be your great grandmother.

That would be Aunt Marie Corsaro, one of many blood relatives on staff. Marie is fully ninety-three years of age; her performance reports read superior; and she' s on the job rain or shine. Marie works by hand and with sophisticated proprietary machinery, deburring and transforming fine wire strands into the silky-smooth fans that define Regal' s Classic Telescopic brushes. She explains her workflow lucidly, at one point breaking into hearty laughter at the mention of her " cheese plate," a container for colored squares of soft material that absorb the black wire residue.

Responding to questions about " the brush secret," Joe graciously splits a brush handle snout to tail to demonstrate how interior compartments do their job of securing the wires. He' d rather we don' t spell it out for MD readers and would-be imitators (no offense intended). Suffice it to say that it' s a brilliant piece of work that cries out: Why didn' t I think of that?

In the corner, Bobby Piper, a working prog drummer who knows his Gentle Giant from his Gong, debunks the myth that Blasticks are constructed from two parts, handle and shaft. " They' re actually one piece," Bobby states. " They won' t separate, and they give drummers the choice between playing the ' brush part' or the handles."

Bobby grasps a sheaf of plastic strands, precision cut to final Blastick length, and inserts them several inches into a capsule-shaped mold the size of a fist. He cranks the heat to 500 degrees and the strands below " sea level" melt. When he removes them, a handle magically emerges, jet black and glossy. Bobby trims excess, attaches the rings that regulate fan spread, and the Blasticks are finished.

Carol is waiting in the next room, where dowels, mostly hickory from the southeastern part of the States, arrive and are put into storage. Maple comes from the northern States, such as Maine, or from Canada. Regal Tip is fussy about lumber. To avoid warping, they have wood kiln-dried exclusively for them.

Bobby Piper introduces the automated Blastick machine (top left). From raw dowels to plugs, the latter residue from stick manufacturing, to be recycled (bottom left). Mark Bertsch shoots compressed air on the back-knife machine under Joe's watchful eye (bottom right).

The dowels go to circular-knife lathes and back-knife lathes. " The circular-knife lathes," Carol explains, " are fifty years old, and my dad bought them used! They were intended to be hand-fed, so we had to convert them to automated-feed. We were told they would never adapt. My father and his brilliant design partner, Walter [Mocniak], proved them wrong."

Regal Tip sticks acquire their smooth finish by being dipped in lacquer, employing a hand-fed machine of Joe Calato' s design. It takes twenty minutes for the finished product to merge. Next we turn to the implementation of the legendary black dot that identifies Regal Tip sticks in your stick bag. On Internet forums,

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you' ll read all sorts of conjecture about its purpose—that it' s cosmetic, or evidence of a production process, or, as one employee put it, a transmitter to the mother ship. Well, MD learned the truth but took a vow of silence. Let' s just say that the dot was a " happy accident" of the stick-making process—and one that contributes to the fine balance of Regal Tip sticks. And, no, it' s not merely cosmetic.

Nylon tips are affixed with proprietary machinery. Once the tip is applied, as drummers over the world have discovered, it' s there to stay.

Sorting is automated according to weight. Sticks motor down a rolling freeway until they sense their home is nearby. They merge off the highway into the appropriate blue container. Sticks are paired; the allowable variance is one gram. It' s common for endorsers, however, to request variations from the benchmark. Case in point: Frank Geracitano' s desk is littered with sticks. He' s filling an order for JR Robinson, cherry-picking the heavier ones.

Elaine Conti is responsible for quality control. She examines every stick that reaches the market. We see her everywhere, same with plant managers Rick Cattanese (twenty-eight years with Calato) and Wade Schaal (twenty-nine years). Aside from wide-ranging duties, Rick and Wade carry on Joe' s tradition of designing machines that go where no machine has gone before.

Distribution

Jason " J" Medynsky manages Direct Music Supply, a distribution company housed in an addition to the original Calato building. Organized with an arm' s-length relationship with J.D. Calato, DMS gets Regal Tip sticks out to music stores across North America. It also handles an incredible range of drum gear.

" We' ve added a lot of accessories, such as Danmar and Slug, and recently we took on Bosphorus cymbals," J explains. " I look at Modern Drummer and say, Hmm, that product looks cool, and we order it. We also handle competing brands such as Pro-Mark. It' s an odd tightrope to walk because of our dedication to Regal Tip, but it' s business. And if there' s demand, we' ll step up. We' d be fools not to."

Big sellers in the US and Canada are the new Van Halen signature sticks, 5As, 5Bs, and 7As. " The Chester Thompson stick and the Jeff Porcaro show no signs of slowing down," J adds. " And just when you think that nothing else could be done, we have the E-Tip. It' s slamming out there!"

Regal Tip Roundup

We gather in the boardroom with Carol, Cathy, J, Joe, and Joe' s wife, Katherine, to get a clear idea about the Calato world view. In short, this is not a company known for initiating gatherings, parties, or glossy foldout ads. Mega is not in their vocabulary. " I got into this to make drumsticks for drummers," Joe states with finality. " It wasn' t a question of mass production or how much money could be made. My money never went into advertising, but into research and development."

R&D is not a clinical exercise for Joe; it' s a hobby and labor of love. Case in point, a few years back Joe was busting to share something he' d fine-tuned at home. He strolled into the factory and invited the front office to join him in the boardroom. He began riding a cymbal, first with a wooden tip, then nylon. Then, his eyes twinkling, he grabbed a prototype stick from his back pocket and laid into the cymbal, carefully noting reactions.

" He starts riding with this new stick," Carol recalls, " and we look at each other. Big deal, it sounds like another wood-tip stick! But that was the point. He' d finally come up with a nylon tip that wouldn' t go mushy but sounded the same as a wood tip. That was the birth of Joe' s E-Series with the scored tip."

Joe beams as he exclaims, " It got written up in The New York Times, a quarter-page! It was my proudest, most exciting moment—except getting married." Joe looks to his wife with a smile.

Cathy reminds us proudly, " Our father was the first person to match drumsticks in pairs. He actually used to weigh them and pitch-pair them, starting in the ' 50s.

" Our father raised the bar for sticks and brushes," she continues. " There are many unique aspects about them. In our Classic brushes, we use real gum rubber for the handles. It' s getting super expensive. We could replace it with a synthetic and make a lot more money, but that' s not what we do at Regal Tip."

When Modern Drummer presented an Editor' s Achievement Award to Joe Calato, the commemorative plaque cited Joe' s responsibility for the quality of sticks in today' s market. We owe Joe, and Regal Tip, our gratitude and a round of happy birthday. Clap along, if you will—but no fancy stuff!

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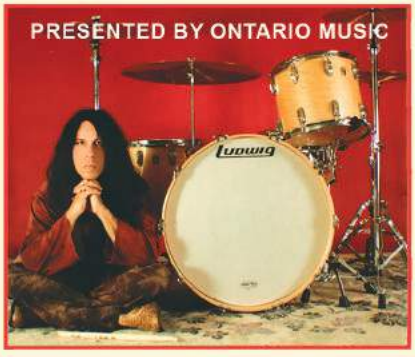

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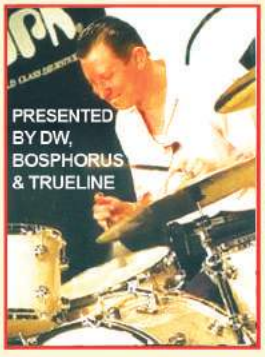

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The 90-Day Challenge

To Becoming A Healthier Drummer

by Jen Hoeft

Here's a letter I received a few months ago from a drummer, Anthony Schumann, who decided it was time to get his body in shape:

"I'm a thirty-six-year-old drummer/realtor. I'm getting to the point in my life where my health is becoming more important to me. I'm married, and my wife and I have had two boys in the last two years (Milo and Mack). I'm planning to quit smoking sometime soon. I also want to elevate my workouts and start making good nutrition a priority. I tried to quit smoking earlier this year, but after four months I had gained fifteen pounds. So, I thought this time I would get professional help from a trainer to help motivate me through this period. I'm a serious drummer and want to take that to the next level. I want my workouts to focus on making me a better drummer, too."

Anthony hired me, a certified personal trainer, because he wanted support, guidance, and accountability in his decisions to quit smoking, and he wanted to a better musician, play pain-free, and enjoy his family and life in a more relaxed, healthy way.

How many of you are like Anthony and want to achieve one or more of these goals? 1) Quit an addiction. 2) Become a better musician. 3) Experience relief from chronic pain. 4) Feel healthy, strong, and joyful.

I'm not professing to cure, treat, or heal any of the above. Like Anthony, you have to do that yourself. But he came to me wanting ideas, a plan, and assistance in achieving his goals. Together we designed a ninety-day challenge that could get him to his goals, as well as help him maintain them. What follows are our journal entries throughout these three months of training.

"My cough is getting so bad I find myself coughing on 2 and 4, when I hit the snare. I want to live! And I'm sick of this filthy habit. I've been hooked on cigarettes for twenty years, and the jig is up. But how will I do this? I feel tired a lot. And I eat late after gigs. It's so hard to eat right on the road. Fast food is easy, while doing the right thing is hard. I need help!

"I want a more balanced life. I want my playing to be more fluid. If I feel better on the inside, won't my playing feel better to the listener? I want a transformation. I'm ready."

Anthony was easy to work with because he was truly ready to make the change. But his goals were tough. He had decided to quit smoking and didn't want to gain weight. But he was open, dedicated, and excited to do whatever it took to become a healthier human. He had a weak back (because it seemed sore all of the time), but he was very eager to get started. (I had to really watch his exercise form at first, for safety issues.)

Our first session was all about figuring out what Anthony wanted to achieve, and then writing it down. It's great fun working with a fellow drummer, because I know the deal. The load in/out, the long sets on a throne, the physical agility and endurance it takes to stay strong yet relaxed—it's challenging but vital to keep the body in top shape in order to avoid injuries and enjoy the remarkable gift of playing drums.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Here are Anthony's three goals for the first thirty days: 1) Quit smoking. 2) Not gain weight. 3) Strengthen his lower back.

I look at addiction as a craving—a sort of chemical/emotional black hole that needs to be filled. With Anthony, we discussed redirecting that urge into something healthier, like exercise. We also used a high–antioxidant drink to help nutritionally support the changes he was going through. And then we had to look at his diet.

"It's hard to eat right, but I'm focused and determined. I need to lose fifteen to twenty pounds. My rules are: 1) No fast food. 2) Bread only one meal a day. 3) One salad a day. 4) No eating late, but if I have to eat late—no bread."

When adjusting food intake, we have to take little steps. You can't do anything too drastic. (Quitting smoking is drastic enough!) So we discussed breakfast. Always eat some protein first thing in the morning. For lunch, have some salad with protein on it. And dinner should consist of protein and veggies.

Late-night eating is always tough for musicians to avoid. If you're hungry after a gig, eat a bowl of healthy cereal, or a banana with peanut butter, or one slice of pizza. The point is to eat protein, carbs, and fats at the same time so that the body is balanced and doesn't crave anything else in order to feel full. The same goes for snacks; keep them light and balanced.

On gigs, I suggested bringing a protein bar or a banana, and tons of water. Those will give you nourishment throughout the night, so you won't be as hungry after the gig.

So Anthony began his journey to become a healthier person and a better drummer.

"Things are going well. I feel myself getting stronger, and I'm definitely making my transformation a priority. I'm working out at different times—in the morning, afternoon, or even late in the evening—if I've had a busy day. My weekly schedule involves working out with Jen once a week. I swim laps for 45 to 60 minutes, once a week. I try to match what I did with Jen once a week. (She writes it all down, so I can replicate it.) Then I do pure cardio on the other four days. I've been focused and positive about my workouts. And I'm not smoking."

Throughout these initial weeks, I closely watched Anthony's lower back. He's slightly long waisted, and he's a tall guy. So we did a few flexibility tests and the plank test (Figure 1) to see what starts to sag first while holding a push-up position. We discovered that his lower back is a little weak compared to the rest of his body. So we stretch and strengthen the core every day. Both of those activities are vital in order to protect and restore the strength and stamina in the back and abdominal muscles.

Figure 4

Figure 7

Figure 5

Figure 6

"Jen has tattooed five words to my brain: 'You can do five more!' I carry that phrase with me to all of my workouts. I'm liking the discomfort of working my muscles, and I'm noticing results!

"To sum up the first month, I feel great. I've lost five pounds, and it takes more effort to increase my heart rate. I had a long rehearsal yesterday and my playing felt really clear and focused. And no pain in my back!"

Anthony is one third of the way through his ninety-day challenge. He's not smoking and has directed his passion to wellness. He's moving/exercising every day, which is vital for keeping his metabolism up and curbing his craving issues. Anthony is also eating more protein throughout the day and drinking a powerful antioxidant beverage. He's eating more salads and less bread. And by using yoga stretches to lengthen his back muscles and hamstrings (Figure 2), and Pilates to strengthen them (Figure 3), Anthony is truly healing/strengthening his back. We're on the right track to accomplishing his first set of health goals.

Days 30–60

"I'm trying to find a balance in my new way of living—not having such an 'all or nothing' mentality. After these ninety days are up, I want to continue to live this way, naturally and not forced.

"I started this journey because I came to the realization that I wanted to live a longer and more fulfilled life. Instead of filling myself up with toxins and unhealthy food, I'm replacing them with fresh air and nutritional

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"The real reason that I haven't performed live for a long time is that I have very severe hearing damage. It's manifested itself as tinnitus, ringing in the ears at the frequencies that I play the guitar. It hurts, it's painful and it's frustrating."

-H.E.A.R. Founding Donor, Musician Pete Townshend Rolling Stone Magazine July, 1989.

Photo by Chauky Davis

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90-DAY CHALLENGE

food. The way I view myself is completely different. We humans have the ability to change—to alter our life' s path. If I put in the time, I will get these rewards. I' m more relaxed, more focused, and less tired, I look better, and my back isn' t hurting.

" Not smoking is the biggest challenge. My brain is telling me that I enjoy smoking—that between sets or after a gig, a smoke would be nice. I get through these periods by changing my thinking. I focus on the positives of not smoking. And I chew a lot of gum."

Last month, we started off great because Anthony was determined and proactive, and he' d decided that he was ready for a transformation. In thirty days—with hard, safe workouts that include yoga, Pilates, and weightlifting, and homework of cardio exercise and nutrition guidelines—Anthony is well on the way to truly feeling great.

We had to create three new goals for month two: 1) One pull-up. 2) Bicycle exercise for thirty seconds (a flexibility and core challenge to touch knee to nose repeatedly.) 3) Lose fifteen to twenty pounds. (Anthony had already lost five pounds, so he really only needed to drop ten to fifteen more.)

These specific goals involve physical challenges that we can really target with training. But how can you train for pull-ups? This exercise is great, but you have to work up to it. Many people have to lose enough body fat to be able to find the strength to do them. That could mean dropping five or fifty pounds; it depends on your current weight and fitness level.

Once you' re at a workable weight, the form of your pull-up is key. You want to keep the shoulder girdle down and strong, and allow the back muscles to do the work (Figure 4). Keep the core tight and your knees slightly bent. Use an assisted pull-up machine or lower the bar at first. I love this exercise for drummers because it strengthens the hands, the shoulders, the back, the core, and the chest—all using your own body weight!

The bicycle exercise is about lengthening/stretching the hamstrings, butt, and back, while flexing the front core muscles (Figure 5). Again, this is perfect for drummers. Our bodies get very tight from balancing on drum thrones for hours. So it' s vital to lengthen/release the hamstrings and strengthen the core in order to be able to play for as long as we want.

It' s also important to train in the opposite direction. The Pilates swimmer movement works the back extensors, butt, and shoulders in an opposing direction to the bicycle (Figure 6). This strengthens the back through motion, which helped Anthony' s back stop hurting while also improving his endurance.

We added cardio interval training to the workouts this month in order to increase the amount of calories burned and to simulate " fight or flight" reactions in the body. We need to train the body to do challenging, powerful, quick, dynamic, and strong movements so that natural hormones keep flowing. This is when having a trainer really comes in handy; it' s much harder to surprise your own body than it is for somebody else to surprise you.

By doing cardio every day, and by maintaining his nutrition, Anthony lost another five pounds. We had to adjust his eating plan because of deprivation binges. So we made Sunday a " free day."

Days 60–90

Anthony Schumann is in the home stretch of his ninety-day challenge to becoming a healthier and stronger person, as well as a better drummer. Initially, Anthony wanted support and coaching as he battled his cigarette addiction. He was able to channel his desire for nicotine into exercise. He began his journey with a " bad back." Now with proper strengthening and stretching, his back is 99% perfect. And his weight-loss goal of fifteen pounds is over halfway there. We worked on adding protein to his breakfast, watched how many carbs he ate, and kept up four to five days of cardio each week.

Anthony is goal-driven and hard on himself. I love that, but I had to coach him on being gentler with himself. Guilt is a rough emotion. It clings to things—food, fat, and the past. But if you' re gentle and loving to yourself, change is inevitable. Anthony' s focus is intense and powerful, and we used that focus to set new goals for the final month.

This month we wanted to: 1) Complete five to seven pull-ups. 2) Do the bicycle exercise for one minute. 3) Lose five more pounds so that he would be in his ideal weight range.

To meet these goals, we needed to increase strength. For four weeks we did a circuit of squats (one- and two-leg), pushes (bench, flies), pulls (lats, rows), presses

(overhead), and curls (core). We did four to five sets of each exercise, with one minute of rest in between. (This recipe can be found in the workbook section of my book FUNdamental Fitness: Playground Exercises For Grownups.) We built strength while keeping Anthony's cardio in the fat-burning zone (60–80% of his target heart rate). We also sometimes used a Bosu (Swiss) stability ball to challenge Anthony's muscles deeper and quicker (Figure 7). Practicing balancing on an unstable surface will help ease the burden of hours of sitting on a throne, or a 2:00 A.M. load-out.

One hour of intense lifting using lighter weights with a lot of repetitions was the key. We didn't want to add bulk. We wanted strength and lean muscle mass. Anthony did the workout with me and one other time during the week. He did cardio on the other four days.

Nutritionally, Anthony began making better choices. His good results helped reinforce that he was on the right path. He lost thirteen pounds while quitting smoking. He also accomplished seven pull-ups, and he did the bicycle exercise for one full minute. (Awesome!)

Of course, this ninety-day challenge wasn't without its challenges. We faced a sprained ankle and back-to-back weeks of strep throat. But we had written down our goals, and we were determined to meet them. (It ultimately took an extra three weeks to accomplish everything, but Anthony did it!)

What Are Your Goals?

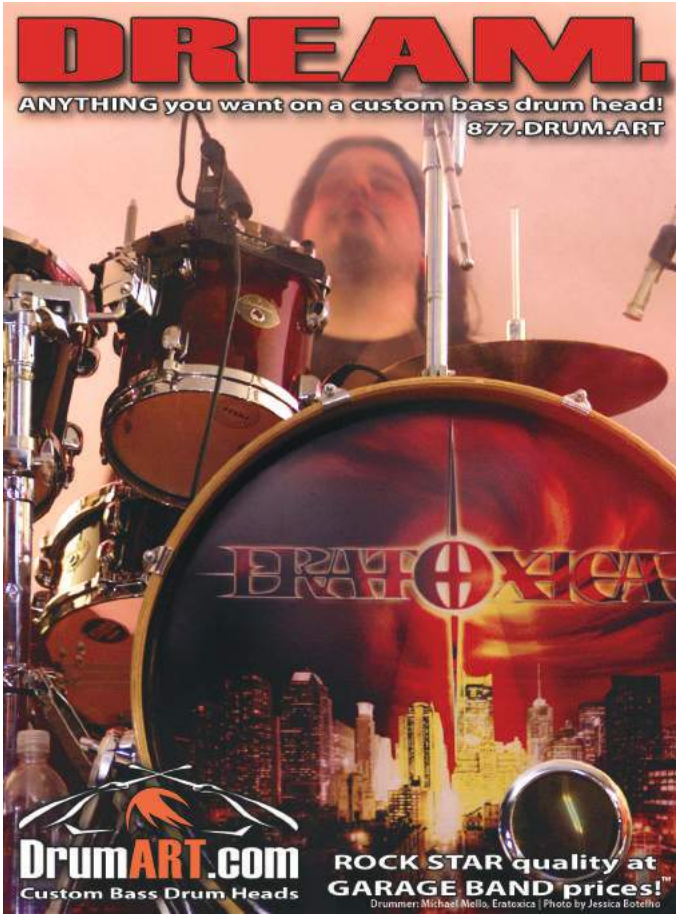
"*The ninety-day challenge is over, and I feel great! I reached all of my goals, and most importantly I've successfully quit smoking. It hasn't been easy—not smoking is still a challenge, but it gets easier as time goes on. I've learned that you can change, no matter how hard it may feel at times. And we can control what we put in our bodies.*

"*My drumming also feels great lately. My back issues are gone, which has come from my strength training. Playing music is such a gift. So why not do it for as long and as well as we want? If I feel great, won't the music feel great, too? I want people to know that if you're struggling with adversity or feeling trapped, you can make different choices to enhance your drumming and your life!*"

Anthony's goals were about health. Without health, we have nothing. So I encourage you to examine what's working, as well as what's not working in your life. Write down your ideas, ask your family for suggestions, hire a professional trainer to help you focus (even just one private lesson can change everything), and set a time frame for yourself.

True change can happen in a heartbeat, but lasting change takes practice. Give yourself sixty to ninety days for the change to become second-nature. And know that drumming is a reflection of you—how you feel, how you feel about yourself, and how easily you can let music flow through you. Keep track of how you feel through the process. It's fun to see the progress.

Jen Hoeft is an ACE certified personal trainer, yoga instructor, and professional drummer in Nashville, Tenessee. She is also the author of *FUNdamental Fitness: Playground Exercises For Grownups.* Contact Jen at jenhoeff.com.



RECORDINGS

Ratings Scale
★★★★★ Classic
★★★★½ Excellent
★★★☆☆ Good
★★☆☆☆ Fair
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

KNUCKLE YUMMY
★★★★½

On Knuckle Yummy's self-titled CD, drummer/producer Dony Wynn (Robert Palmer, Brooks & Dunn) comes across as the thinking man's swamp drummer. The unique three-piece oozes an oily, gritty essence, employing all sorts of gutter rhythms and tones in search of the mythical roadhouse where Led Zeppelin hogs the pool table, The Butthole Surfers do shots at the bar, and Tom Waits scribbles notes in the corner. You can practically envision Wynn squinting, snorting, and surging as he lays into what sounds like a huge, wide-open parade-style bass drum, augmented by riveted or cracked 'n' stacked cymbals, tambourines, and cowbells. Wynn clearly learned the lessons of Bonzo's upended beats and audacious punctuations. Check out the three severely weird fills between 3:45 and 3:49 of "Nice And Low" or the unexpected double-time snare/bass attack near the two-minute mark on opener "This Box" for examples. Then pour yourself a drink or six, call up an ex-girlfriend or three, and enjoy one hell of a ride. (www.myspace.com/knuckleyummy) **Adam Budofsky**

ENCORE
by Patrick Berkery

CAROLE KING TAPESTRY: LEGACY EDITION

Drumming isn't the first thing that comes to mind when discussing Carole King's 1971 singer-songwriter masterpiece *Tapestry*. Yet the subtle touches used by *Tapestry*'s two timekeepers—session great **RUSS KUNKEL** and the late **JOEL O'BRIEN**—factor greatly in the varied feels and emotions of King's compositions. Kunkel's tickling of the drums and cymbals in "So Far Away" makes it seem like he's hearing the song for the first time and reacting instinctively to the changes. That sparseness heightens the song's feeling of longing. And O'Brien played with a syncopated sway on songs like "I Feel The Earth Move" and "Beautiful" that perfectly punctuated King's brassier notions. (Sony Legacy)

RUSS KUNKEL ON TAPESTRY

What are your recollections of Joel O'Brien?
He was a fairly unheralded player, but so tasteful. Joel was a kind and gentle soul. I admired his style and loved watching him play. He had a kind of controlled abandon that was unique at the time. He was well read and very funny. I miss him.

How did you arrive at the parts for "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" and "So Far Away?" They both have so much personality for being so sparse.
I remember Carole wanting the arrangements to be sparse, almost like a slightly embellished songwriter demo.

On "Where You Lead," you lock in with a lot of vocal syncopations. Was that arrangement pretty fleshed out in advance?
Carole King is not only a brilliant songwriter, she is also a great arranger; all those syncopations were written into the song. I do remember thinking the song reminded me of the Motown sound, so I think I tried to put some of that flavor in the drum part.

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN DIAMONDHEAD
★★★★½

When you're going to turn seventy-five, what better way to celebrate than to record a hip jazz album? Longtime tenor player Newman gathers an impressive lineup for just such an occasion, with **Curtis Fuller** on trombone, **Cedar Walton** on piano, **Peter Washington** on bass, and **YORON ISRAEL** on drums. The collection of tunes is swinging, funky, and soulful, with great playing all around. As for Israel, his fat, loose snare is perfect when things lay back, but moves things along while remaining earthy when the tempo is up. And the drummer gets to showcase his sense of melody, groove, and sticking during several nice solo spots. (Highnote) **Martin Patmos**

MATTHEW SWEET SUNSHINE LIES
★★★½☆

RIC MENCK (Liz Phair, Velvet Crush, Marianne Faithful, The Tyde) has been giving Matthew Sweet's lovesick pop songs a polite yet firm kick in the ass for nearly twenty years. Perhaps Menck's outside pursuits keep things fresh, because their union sounds as inspired as ever here. Song-wise, *Sunshine Lies* isn't quite up to par with Sweet's classic *Girlfriend* (a tall, tall order), but the pop maestro still whips plenty of grit and guile into his melody-filled confections. And after all these years, Menck can still fill in the blanks like a garage rock dynamo (check out his wake-the-neighbors bashing on "Flying") and lay down the perfect pop backbeat ("Byrdgirl"). (Shout Factory) **Patrick Berkery**

BOREDOMS SUPER ROOTS #9
★★★☆☆

Since the early '90s, Japan's Boredoms have been a band to name-check by fans and critics with a taste for avant-alternative sounds, from electronica to neo-Krautrock to tribal noise. The lineup on *Super Roots #9*, a live recording of a 2004 performance with a twenty-person choir, features drummers **YOSHIMI**, **KAZUYA NISHIMURA**, and **EDA**, as well as founder/DJ/conductor of sorts **Yamatsuka Eye**. Comprised of one forty-minute cut, *Super Roots #9* challenges and mostly rewards listeners with an ear for gutsy arrangement choices and rhythmic theme & variation, and the patience to ignore the desire for musical resolution and just wallow in the hugeness of the sound—and the energy and synergy of the players driving this beast. An admirable attempt to stretch the possibilities of multi-drumset in modern rock music. **Adam Budofsky**

UNDEROATH SURVIVE KALEIDOSCOPE
★★★½☆

From the department of "duck and cover" hails the much-lauded Underoath, whose metalcore palette is crammed full of explosive passages, leaving a little melodic shrapnel in its wake. Manning the turret on this live CD/DVD is drummer/vocalist **AARON GILLESPIE** (also of The Almost), whose full-bore appearance is made very apparent with his persistent, pummeling crashes mingling with sporadic sensitivity. Launching with the damaging "Returning Empty Handed," Gillespie proves that the monstrous tracks laid on the band's 2006 gold-certified studio album *Define The Great Line* are capably replicated on the stage as well. Best of all, there's a concert DVD included so you can see how this battle plan is enacted. (Tooth & Nail) **Waleed Rashidi**

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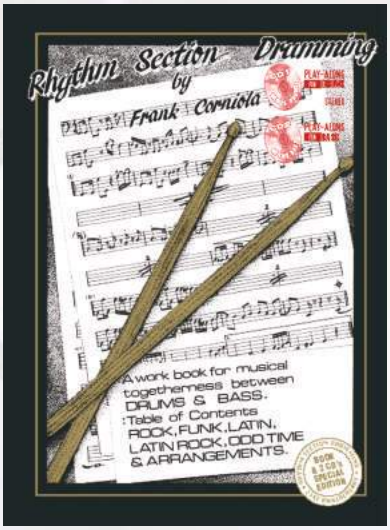
RHYTHM SECTION DRUMMING
BY FRANK CORNIOLA

★★★★½

BOOK/CD (2) LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $24.95

Australian drummer/educator Frank Corniola's re-released 1985 book *Rhythm Section Drumming* is an indispensable resource for drummers and their bass-playing counterparts to get inside each other's musical headspace. It contains many grooves for rock, contemporary funk, Latin, and odd times, along with suggested accompanying bass parts to further explore rhythmic possibilities not usually focused on in most drumming books. There are fully written-out and increasingly complex arrangements for both instruments, including pages labeled "Adding 16th Triplets To Ride Cymbal And Bass Drum." Key is the new addition of two well-produced CDs of play-along tracks—one without bass, the other without drums. (Hal Leonard) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

THE VERSATILE DRUMMER: A COMPLETE COURSE IN A VARIETY OF MUSICAL STYLES BY PETE SWEENEY

★★★½☆

BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE $19.95

The Versatile Drummer is a library of many different beats and grooves that any drummer would love to have in his or her back pocket, all packed into an easy-to-read 95-page book. Chapters one and two cover all that it takes to start reading drum notation and gain control of your sticks (assuming you already know how to hold the stick and strike the drum). The remaining eight chapters dig into all types of grooves, from rock, funk, and jazz to jungle and songo—and that makes for a *lot* of beats. Each lesson is accompanied by a track on the included CD. (Alfred) **Fran Azzarto**

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN MEETING OF THE MINDS

★★★½☆

DVD LEVEL: ALL $26.98

When John McLaughlin traveled to India in 2007, he never intended to make an album. But soon enough he was recording with some of India's finest young musicians, who added touches of the East to the guitarist's Western-style material. The result is the LP *Floating Point* plus this making-of DVD. Both feature the chops hound **RANJIT BAROT**, a tireless, multilayered drummer whose fusion roots seem as deep as his grasp of Indian rhythms. Here, Barot is captured whipping up a frenzy on his kit and working out tricky patterns along with ace percussionist **SIVAMANI**. The handy Indian system of singing and clapping rhythms is not explained but is fascinating to see in practical use. Meanwhile, McLaughlin leads effortlessly—he'll teach the players a mischievously accented, super-complicated lick, but he'll also tell them to just blast off. "The best five days I've had in my lifetime," Barot says at session's end. (Mediastarz Monaco/Abstract Logix) **Michael Parillo**

STUFF GOOD DRUMMERS SHOULD KNOW BY ED ROSCETTI

★★★½☆

BOOK/CD LEVEL: ALL 19.95

A drummer's mini-encyclopedia, this book gathers all sorts of drum information, making it readily available for the drummer who needs to know. Pretty much everything a drummer might encounter gets mentioned: music styles, hardware, musicianship issues, studio language, and so on. For example, an entry like "heads" gives a basic idea of different drumhead types. Style entries like "jazz" or "heavy metal," while thin on history, aim to provide a point of reference for further exploration. More significant are the written and recorded music examples, which demonstrate everything discussed. *Stuff…* provides drummers with a solid sense of what's what. (Hal Leonard) **Martin Patmos**

EIGHTH-NOTE ROCK AND BEYOND
BY GLENN CEGLIA WITH DOM FAMULARO

★★★☆☆

BOOK/MP3 CD LEVEL: ALL $14.95

The opening sections of this book might seem like a breeze to master, but as you sail toward exercises in Chapters Six (based on Bonzo's kick pattern on Led Zeppelin's classic "When The Levee Breaks"), Seven ("Syncopated 16th-Note Rhythmic Pattern"), and Nine ("Putting It All Together With Ghost Notes"), your reading skills, independence, and technique will be tweaked and well tested. The helpful counting key and accompanying MP3-loaded CD will accelerate your understanding of 8th- and 16th-note concepts and assist you in cleanly executing variations of both. (In only one instance does the transcription not match the corresponding audio file.) This book has been designed to introduce beginners to basic and common rock beats, but most drummers, especially as they complete the last set of examples, can use this as warm-up material or to secure rhythmic ammo for their arsenal. (Wizdom Media/Alfred) **Will Romano**

TAKING THE REINS

POOGIE BELL BAND
GET ON THE KIT

★★★☆☆

Bell (Erykah Badu, David Bowie, Chaka Khan) either sleeps with drumsticks tucked under his pillow, or he popped outta the womb with hickory in his hands. Either way, he's a natural who knows the value of space. Greasy jazz-funk rockers such as the Barney Miller theme song–esque "Dark & Happy" and the DJ-scratchin' groovefest "Jamestown" might not be completely original (other songs are reminiscent of Tower Of Power), but Poogie's deep pockets and the dominant retro party vibe are enough to satisfy drum-heads and music fans alike. (www.poogiebellband.com) **Will Romano**

FRANK BRIGGS CHINA RANCH

★★★★☆

Veteran fusion drummer/educator Briggs gathers LA's top jazz/rock/world fusion cats (keyboardist **Steve Weingart** and bassist **Ric Fierabracci** in particular) to perform his dynamic instrumental fusion compositions, designed to allow these monsters to shine. Briggs' tasty chops and fat grooves highlight this outstanding debut release. (www.frankbriggs.com) **Mike Haid**

CHRIS BRIEN WORLD RHYTHMS

★★★★☆

Like Virgil Donati and Grant Collins, Australia's Chris Brien is a percussive one-man-band Wonder From Down Under. Brien's impressively packaged eighteen-page hardcover CD booklet (in English and Chinese) is not to be outdone by his seventeen rhythmically outrageous first-take tracks. Realizing that there are no overdubs makes these complex yet musical drumset compositions all the more inspiring. (www.chrisbrien.com) **Mike Haid**

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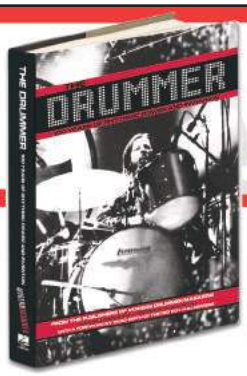

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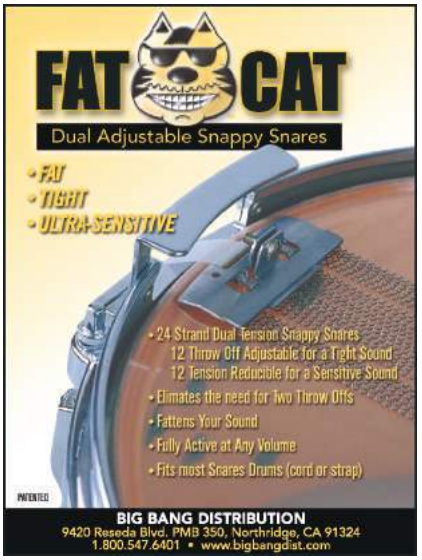
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Percfest 2008

A hundred twenty events, 25,000 attendees, and six days of intensive drumming and percussion gigs—these are the figures of the twelfth edition of Percfest, Italy' s longest standing percussion festival. Stationed in Laigueglia, a gorgeous small town on the Italian Riviera, this year' s festival featured instruction, seminars, concerts, and jam sessions with some of the most important European jazz players and Italy' s best drummers and percussionists.

Percfest' s 2008 lineup featured the band Iguazu with Argentinean drummer **Alex Battini De Barreiro**. This powerful Latin trio inspired the crowd with a lot of intricate polyrythms. Perhaps the best concert at the event was by the funk band Groovinator, which featured **Marcello Surace** on drums and Brazilian percussionist **Gilson Silveira**.

Jazz giant Kenny Barron performed with a trio featuring the powerful drumming of **Francisco Mela**. The Holland Latinos Friends is an Italian/Dutch band with drummer **Nicola Angelucci** (who also played with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt), vibraphonist **Fritz Landesberger,** and percussionist **Jeroen de Rijk**. Italian master **Roberto Gatto** appeared in two concerts: with his own trio, and with singer Gino Paoli. Gatto, who' s one of the most popular Italian drummers, was playing at his energetic and speedy best.

Percfest also featured the perfect swing of Doctor 3' s **Fabrizio Sferra,** as well as the world music band Gnawa Gnawa, with American **Sangoma Everett** on drums and Arabian percussionists **Rida Barrady**, **Yassine Ghailani**, **Jalai Abantour**, and **Mostafa Barradi**.

Seminars and lessons were held in open arenas by Italian drummers **Ellade Bandini, Gianni Branca, Luca Capitani, Giorgio Di Tullio, Gaetano Fasano, Walter Calloni, Maxx Furian, Federico Paulovich,** and **Ricardo Lombardo**. Percussion masterclasses featured Brazilian **Gilson Silveira**, Dutchman **Jeroen de Rijk**, and Italian teachers **Dado Sezzi, Marco Fadda**, **Lorenzo Gasperoni**, **Giorgio Palombino**, and **Leonardo di Angilla**.

Some of the most attended events of the week were the fitness sessions on the beach, directed by veteran studio great **Ellade Bandini**.

Percfest' s talent competition, " International Challenge For Creative Percussionists," was won by Italian drummer Dario Congedo, who played cymbals using a bow, pulled off fascinating polyrythms, and created captivating loops with the help of digital effects.

For more info, visit www.percfest.com.

story and photos by Mario A. Riggio

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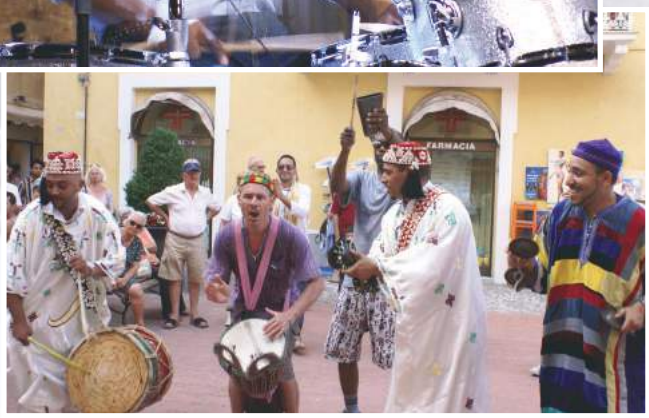


Gnawa Gnawa

Drums Online

VINTAGEDRUMMUSEUM.COM is a unique and ambitious Web site striving to document every drum brand and type from the Civil War to the present. Poco drummer and owner of George' s Drum Shop, George Lawrence, designed the site to be used as a free resource for all users. Consisting of an " open source" format similar to Wikipedia, vintagedrummuseum.com will grow continually as visitors upload their own information about different companies. The site has forums discussing every current major and minor brand, as well as some defunct companies. There is also a classified section for buying/selling gear, as well as links to eBay auctions. For information on how to contribute to the site, or to become a moderator, contact George Lawrence at george@georgesdrumshop.com.

Tenth Annual Rhythm Drumcamp

This past July 25–31, more than sixty students attended the Rhythm Drumcamp in Marktoberdorf, Germany, which featured daytime lessons and workshops by drumset artists **Steve Smith**, **Bertram Engel**, **Phil Maturano**, **Russ Miller**, and **RenéCreemers**, as well as percussionists **Richie Gajate Garcia**, **Juan Carlos Melian**, and **Hakim Ludin**. The all-star instructional staff also performed special sold-out concerts in the evenings. For more info, go to www.modakademie.de.

story and photos by Heinz Kronberger

Bertram Engel

Russ Miller

Phil Maturano

René Creemers

YouTube CLIPS OF THE MONTH

by John E. Citrone

"EXTREME LIVE—1995—MANGINI SOLO"

Here we have a bootleg video of Massachusetts rock band Extreme in concert in 1995. A long-haired Mike Mangini begins his solo at around 1:30, displaying his lightning-fast double kick chops, sense of melodic invention (on a symmetrical RotoTom kit), budding independence experimentation, and enough visual fireworks to keep the crowd engaged.

"BENNY GREB—HAMBURG"

Benny Greb is a monster groove player, as exhibited in the last quarter of this clip (starting at around 1:30). But up to that point, he's at his flamboyant best. Opening with the old "stick caught in the hi-hat" gag, Greb launches into a blazing flurry of double-kick trickery, cross-sticking, super-fast snare work, and a few stick twirls.

"MANU DELAGO HANG SOLO"

For those unfamiliar with hang drums, Delago will give you a quick schooling. Sitting on a sofa, the master hang drummer pulls gorgeous melodies and striking rhythms from these exotic Swiss drums.

John E. Citrone records and tours with instrumental indie band Greenness and with his original project, Dovetonsil. Send clip suggestions to dovetonsil@hotmail.com.

In Memoriam

Rick Malkin

As we were going to press, we learned that **BUDDY HARMAN**, one of Nashville's best-known and most-recorded drummers, died on August 21 of congestive heart failure. He was seventy-nine.

Born Murrey Mizell Harman Jr., "Buddy" played drums on more than 18,000 recordings, including Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman," Patsy Cline's "Crazy," Johnny Cash's "Ring Of Fire," and Elvis Presley's "Little Sister." Harman was the first staff drummer on the Grand Ole Opry and the first prominent drumset player in country music.

We'll be featuring a more in-depth tribute to Buddy's life and career in a future issue.

KIT OF THE MONTH

Out With The Old...

Forty-something drummer Dave Sewell thought he got his hands on his dream kit back in the ' 70s when he was working the New Jersey club circuit. " My drum hero at the time was Alan White from Yes, so I ended up getting a chrome set like his," Dave recalls. " Unfortunately that kit looked a lot better than it sounded. So I vowed that someday I would get a great sounding set."

The drummer' s current set is a ten-piece DW in Burnt Toast Fade finish with 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", 15", and 16" toms, two 22" bass drums (with acoustic sub woofers), and a 14" snare. His cymbals are Sabian Paragons and Paistes. The entire set is held together by a Gibraltar rack system.

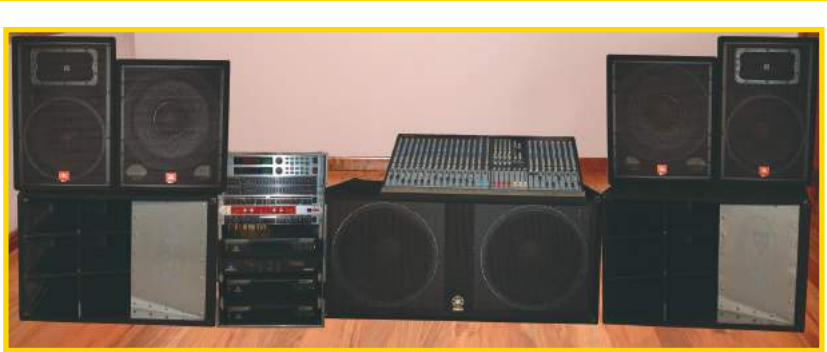
Since these beauties are rarely used outside of his home, Dave decided to replicate a big venue vibe by putting together a personal drum PA. " I always like the way drums sound in a big concert venue," says Sewell. " So I put together a PA that consists of six 8" bass bins, two 15" cabinets with horns, an Allen & Heath twenty four–channel board, an effects rack, and over 6,000 watts of power!"

In addition to building monster kits, Dave is the co-founder of The Foundation For Music, a non-profit organization devoted to helping young people learn a musical instrument.

Is Your Drumkit Something Special?

Of course it is! Now how about sharing your cool creation with thousands of fellow *Modern Drummer* readers. Simply send us some photos and a brief description of your unique set, and we'll consider it for inclusion in *Kit Of The Month*. And if we do pick your pride & joy for coverage in *MD*, we'll send you a cool MD Drum Bag/Cooler—for free! Just follow the simple directions below.

Photo Submission: Digital photos on disk as well as print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Hi-res digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to miked@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.



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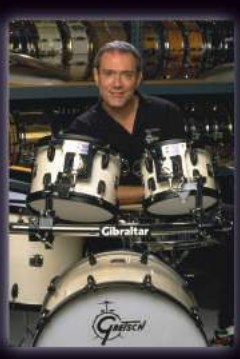

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